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THE

WORKS

OF THE REVEREND

WILLIAM LAW, A.M.

IN NINE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

CONTAINING

Three Letters to the Bishop of Bangor.

LONDON:

Printed for J. RICHARDSON, in *Pater-Noster-Row.*

M,DCC,LXII.

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A SHORT ACCOUNT

OF THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF THE LATE

Rev. WILLIAM LAW, A.M.

AUTHOR OF

"THE SERIOUS CALL TO A DEVOUT LIFE,"

And of many other not less valuable Works;

WITH

AN APPENDIX,

Which contains

SPECIMENS OF THE WRITINGS.

BY RICHARD TIGHE.

"He that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God."

1 John, ch. iv.

"Love is a disposition of the Mind to take pleasure in the "Happiness of another."

Wolfius.

London:

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THE LIFE

OF

WILLIAM LAW.

THE late Reverend William Law, of King's Cliffe, in Northamptonshire, has by some been called "a celebrated enthusiast;" * while by others of a different character he is held to have been an enlightened and well-informed teacher of the way of salvation from a state of sin, by a Saviour and Deliverer, Jesus Christ. He was born in the year 1686, second son of Mr. Thomas Law, grocer.

It is probable, but not certain, that he received the rudiments of his education at

* See a note in the Register of Emmanuel College.

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Oakham or Uppingham, in Rutlandshire: on the 7th of June, 1705, he became a student in Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

In the year 1708, he commenced Bachelor of Arts; in 1711, was elected Fellow of the College of which he was a member; and in 1712, commenced Master of Arts.

Soon after the accession of his Majesty King George I. Mr. Law being called upon to take the oaths prescribed by Act of Parliament, and to sign the Declaration, refused to do so; in consequence of which he vacated his fellowship in 1716, and from thenceforward was distinguished by the name of a non-juring minister.

That he was at one time a curate in London, appears from a passage in one of his letters not yet printed, or from some other good authority; but whether he acted in that capacity while fellow of Emmanuel, or soon after he vacated his fellowship, cannot now be determined by the Author of these sheets; but it is well known that he soon went to reside at Putney with Mr. Gibbon,

as tutor to his son Edward Gibbon, who was father of Edward Gibbon the Younger, author of "The History of the Decline and "Fall of the Roman Empire."

It seems probable that Mr. Law's political principles, no less than his piety and learning, recommended him to Mr. Gibbon, who was himself a friend to the family of Stuart.

In a letter to his brother Mr. George Law, apparently written soon after the year 1716, but without date, he thus states his reason for refusing to take the oaths :— "As to the multitude of swearers, that has "no influence upon me; their *reasons* are "only to be considered, and every one "knows that no good ones can be given for "people's swearing the direct contrary to "what they believe. Would my con- "science have permitted me to have done "this, I should stick at nothing where my "interest was concerned; for what can be "more heinously wicked than heartily to "wish the success of a person upon the "account of his right, and at the same

" time, in the most solemn manner, in " presence of God, and as you hope for " mercy, to declare that he has no right at " all ?"

By many of his contemporaries he was no doubt highly esteemed, as were others of the clergy and laity called non-jurors, for the sacrifice he had made of his interest to his principles: that act was perhaps the first step taken towards an entire devotion of himself to the service of God, by which devotedness he was afterwards eminently distinguished.

In the year 1717, Mr. Law engaged in controversy, by writing in favour of the authority of the Christian Ministry in a National Church.* Thirty years afterwards, he would not have written so warmly on that subject, or even thought it interesting, although he was to the last convinced of the utility of that establishment called the Church, and no doubt held that no person can be authorised from above to shake or pull down the ancient fabric, who is with-

* See Appendix, No. I.

out power from on high to set up something better in its place.

In his parish church he joined in the public worship of God; in his parish church, and there only, he joined in celebration of the sacred rite of the Lord's Supper; and in the same ground with those who were united to him by these acts of religion he lies interred.

Mr. Law well knew that the good Shepherd had many sheep who were not of one fold outwardly, and that the fold mentioned in Scripture related to inward influence alone. Where two or three meet under divine influence, there is Christ vitally present in the midst.*

In the year 1727, Mr. Law founded an Almshouse for the reception and maintenance of two old women, either unmarried and helpless, or widows; also a School for the instruction and clothing of fourteen girls.†

In the year 1755, the lands appropriated to the support of his houses produced

* See Appendix, No. XIII. † Ib. No. III.

yearly fifty-four pounds sterling; they now produce sixty-nine pounds sterling, a rise inadequate to the increased value of the produce.

As Mr. Law's first publications were well received,* and as he had been in Mr. Gibbon's family as tutor and chaplain for some years before 1727, he might have had the means of founding the widow's house, and of educating fourteen girls, without the assistance of any friend; and perhaps he did so, although it is by many believed that the money so applied was the gift of an unknown benefactor.

By Mr. Thomas Law, now living at Cliffe, the grandson of Mr. George Law, who was the eldest brother of William, it is said, that while Mr. Law was standing at the door of a shop in London, a person unknown to him asked whether his name

* After Mr. Law retired to King's Cliffe, he refused to take payment for the copies of his publications, and might have done so at an earlier period. It is said that his bookseller, Mr. Richardson, once prevailed on him to accept one hundred guineas.

was William Law, and whether he was of King's Cliffe; and after having received a satisfactory answer, delivered a sealed paper, directed to the Reverend William Law, which contained a bank-note for one thousand pounds; and it is believed by Mr. T. Law, that by those means the small almshouse at Cliffe was built and endowed.

At what time after the year 1732, Mr. Law quitted Mr. Gibbon's house at Putney, and went to reside in London, the Author of this Memoir cannot learn; but he has authority for saying, that some *time before* the year 1740, he was instrumental in making Mrs. Hester Gibbon, his pupil's sister, acquainted with Mrs. Elizabeth Hutcheson, widow of Archibald Hutcheson, Esq. of the Middle Temple.

Mr. Hutcheson, when near his decease, recommended to his wife a retired life, and told her, that he knew no person whose society would be so likely to prove profitable and agreeable to her as that of Mr. Law, of whose writings he highly approved. Mrs. Hutcheson, whose maiden name was

Lawrence, had been the wife of Colonel Robert Steward; and when she went to reside in Northamptonshire, was in possession of a large income, from the produce of an estate which was in her own power, and of a life-interest in property settled on her in marriage, or devised to her by Mr. Hutcheson.

These two ladies, Mrs. Hutcheson and Mrs. H. Gibbon, much devoted to God, and desirous of living entirely to his glory, by the exercise of love to their Christian brethren, formed the plan of living together in the country, and in retirement from that circle of society generally, but absurdly, called the world, and of taking Mr. Law as their chaplain, instructor, and almoner.

We may be sure that their purpose was to cultivate those good qualities which best prepare the heart for the enjoyment of that blessed region "where all worketh "and willeth in quiet love."

In execution of their laudable design, they took a house at Thrapston, in North-

amptonshire; but that situation not proving agreeable to them, the two ladies enabled Mr. Law, in the year 1740, or soon afterwards, to prepare a roomy house near the church at King's Cliffe, and in that part of the town called "The Hall-Yard." This house had belonged to Mr. Thomas Law, and was then possessed by William, the only property devised to him by his father. It had a good garden annexed, and a close of pasture ground, in one corner of which the small almshouse built by W. Law now stands. Part of the land, at this time in possession of Mr. Law's kinsman, T. Law, was, in small parcels, purchased at different times by Mrs. H. Gibbon, and by her devised to the son of William Law's nephew, who made additions to the estate by purchases after Mrs. Gibbon's death; and dying unmarried, devised the whole to his brother Mr. Thomas Law.

The presence of Mr. Law, no doubt, contributed to make the house in "The "Hall-Yard" a blessed place of retreat; the whole income of his two female friends

being devoted to the relief of the poor, and all their time to the cultivation of that good seed which the adorable Lover of Mankind had sown in their hearts. Mrs. Hutcheson's annual income was little more or less than two thousand pounds, and that of Mrs. Gibbon nearly one thousand.

As the expenditure within the house was in all respects remarkably frugal, very great must have been the expenditure without; so great as to make those at Cliffe, who remember Mr. Law and his companions, say, that their acts of charity were boundless.

The daily distribution of food and raiment at their door never ceased, nor the granting of occasional relief to the sick and needy. It is said that the report of such munificence spread to places far from Cliffe, and produced applications from many whose wants were less pressing than the want of necessary food and raiment, and that such were often gratified by charitable donations.

Mr. Edward Gibbon says * that his aunt Hester was the original from whence the character of Miranda in the Serious Call was drawn; but as that lady was very young in her father's house when the Serious Call was written, it seems likely that she was rather an imperfect copy than a model, and that the original existed only in Mr. Law's imagination.

It is said, and probably with truth, that Mr. Law, while employed by Mr. Gibbon as tutor to his son, acted voluntarily in giving tuition to his daughter; and that his pious instructions made an early and lasting impression on the mind of his female pupil, though they had but little effect on that of her brother. Why a considerable part of the family estate was devised to her and her sister, Mrs. Elliston, mother of Lady Eliot, in prejudice of the heir at law, cannot now be accounted for in a satisfactory manner. After the lapse of half a century, Mrs. Hester Gibbon's share reverted into the natural channel by her will, and was for

* See Appendix, No. II.

a short time enjoyed by Edward Gibbon, who long expected it, but not without apprehensions, that his aunt would devise it to some of those friends with whom she had spent her life.

In the year 1761, on the morning of the 9th of April, Mr. Law departed, in the joyful hope of a blessed life in regions of peace and love. He bore with patience the severe pains of an internal inflammation, which caused his death. When near expiring, he sang an hymn with a strong and very clear voice.*

Either before he sang the hymn, or soon after, he is said to have spoken words, by which it was evident that he felt the powers of the world to come, " as a flame of " love which would endure for ever." To the Author of this Work it appears almost certain that he expired shortly after singing the hymn.

By those persons now living at Cliffe who knew Mr. Law, it is reported that he

* The hymn sung by him will be found at the end of this Work.

was by nature of an active and chearful disposition, very warm-hearted, *unaffected*, and affable, but not to appearance so remarkable for meekness as some others of the most revered members of the Christian Church are *reported* to have been.

That man has but little pretensions to the name of Christian, who does not know that to be meek and lowly of heart is the first of the good qualities which distinguish those who in an eminent degree deserve to bear the name of their Master. No writer on the spiritual life knew better than Mr. Law, that without a victory over wrath and pride, it is not possible to enjoy tranquillity of mind in this world, much less the happiness of that holy place of which the meek Lamb of God is the life and the light.

If it be true that Mr. Law did but *aim* at that blessed state of mind, of which he well knew the inestimable value, we may be sure, that while he acknowledged and taught that all the acts of the followers of Jesus Christ should be acts of love,* his

* See Appendix, No. XI.

efforts in strife against sin, with prayer to his great Deliverer, never ceased.

Whether we take his character from reports, or from his writings, we must revere his memory, believing that few have been his equals in this age, and not many in any age of the Church. The wisdom given to him was such as we cannot suppose to reside in any but those who are of a contrite and humble spirit, and tremble at their Master's word.*

By the works of which he was the author, during the last twenty years of his life, it plainly appears, that in love of all goodness, no person exceeded him; in labours designed to draw all to the service of that Master, of whose loving-kindness and mercy he spoke copiously in all his writings, he was never weary; to speak good of his name, seems to have been his greatest delight, and the first wish of his heart, that he and all mankind might enjoy the full benefit of that wonderful act of love by which the gates of heaven were opened to

* See Appendix, No. X.

all believers. Deliver us from evil, was his daily prayer; a petition suited to the mind of contrite sinners in all places, and on all occasions, and in his dying hour not forgotten by Mr. Law.*

He who taught his disciples to pray in the closet, and commanded them there to intercede for their enemies, could not have designed to set limits to their benevolence: when therefore we pray for deliverance from evil, it is our duty to comprehend the whole race of mankind in our humble and earnest petitions.

Does it not follow from hence that God wills the salvation of all men from a state of sin?

Mr. Law, above all things, recommended to his readers the passive virtues of meekness, patience, and resignation, testifying truly that all the acts of a Christian should be directed by the spirit of love, however restricted the servant of Christ might be in power, wisdom, and knowledge. Such was the perfection at which

* See the Hymn sung by him, line sixth.

Mr. Law taught his scholars to aim, and such the standard by which he directed them to judge their words and actions. Mrs. Gibbon might well say, "his life "may be seen in his writings."* By the writer of this character of Mr. Law, it may now be said,

"Quis dignè scripserit?"

And it may be feared, that while he endeavours to give a short account of his writings, he shall fail of giving satisfaction to those who are warm friends of the sentiments contained in Mr. Law's works.

Between the years 1717 and 1737, he published several tracts, all in support of religion in general, accompanied with the earnest recommendation of good morals. Of these works the best known is, "The "Serious Call to a devout Life." To this and other of Mr. Law's first writings some object as not dwelling sufficiently on the means of reconciliation to God, repentance and faith.

* This answer is said to have been given by Mrs. Gibbon on being asked to write Mr. Law's life.

A few years before the publication of the Serious Call, he wrote a treatise on Christian Perfection, which contains excellent doctrine. Some pages of his best style of writing may be found in it,* but what that work proves might have been explained in fewer words: it appears to have been superseded by the Serious Call in public estimation.

The style of his censure on the playhouse may be found fault with,† but to the substance of the work no serious Christian will object: to such a one it must ever appear, that the exhibitions at the theatre cannot please any but those whose vain minds take pleasure in vanity. "Vana "vanis!" It is to little purpose to dwell on this subject: those who like shows, let what will be said, will always find arguments in defence of their favourite amusement, while those who in any degree regulate their lives by the precepts of the gospel, seeking salvation from a state of sin, will avoid scenes where the lust of the

* See Appendix, No. IV. † Ibid. No. II.

flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, find ample gratification.

The Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life, is by many thought his most valuable work. The design is first to show that devotion means devotedness to God, and that prayer, public and private, retirement for meditation and study,* are but particular acts of devotion, and no more than means for the cultivation of the love of God and man.

Giving good words with the mouth, while the heart is far from God, can answer no beneficial purpose: the supplicant should at the least have the design to please his Lord and Master in all the actions of his life; and if he is not more affected by the desire to do the will of God here on earth as it is done in heaven, than by the desire to be made happy by any kind of selfish gratification, he has not yet taken the first step on that ladder which reaches from earth to heaven.

* The proverb says, "Qui studet orat." Mr. Law is reported to have said, that "reading is eating."

"A man," says Mr. Law, "has no rea-
"son to look on himself as a disciple of
"Christ, who has not so much piety as to
"intend, as the happiest and best thing in
"the world, to please God in all the actions
"of his life; and yet it is for want of this
"degree of piety that we see such a mix-
"ture of sin and folly in those who are
"called the better sort of people."

He illustrates his doctrine by many well-drawn characters, and fixes the attention of his readers by a clear and lively style, far superior to that of other writers on devotion. Many have testified that the reading of the Serious Call made such lasting impressions on their minds, *under the divine influence*, that they never lost sight of the objects presented to their view on that occasion.*

In a chapter on Resignation, he speaks admirably well of the happiness of doing the will of our Heavenly Father, and of ceasing to do our own natural will, which,

* A specimen of the Serious Call will be found in Appendix, No. V.

unrestrained, drives us into the commission of acts hurtful to our fellow-creatures, destructive to ourselves, and displeasing in the sight of our Creator.

By the Christian Perfection, and Serious Call, after proving that devotion means devotedness to God, it is the author's design to convince his reader, that we cannot be wise and happy but by submitting to the moral government of our Heavenly Father, whose laws are given for our benefit; and that such happiness as this evil world can afford, without prospect of life in a future and better state of existence, is but like the dream of an unsound mind.

With these words he concludes the Serious Call:—"All worldly attainments, "whether of greatness, wisdom, or bra- "very, are but empty sounds; there is "nothing wise, or great, or noble, in a hu- "man spirit, but rightly to know, and "heartily to worship and adore the great "God, who is the support and life of all "spirits, whether in heaven or on earth."

In the year 1737, Mr. Law wrote on the

sacred rite of the Lord's Supper; and then first began to teach as one who looked on religion to be entirely the work of God by divine influence on the heart, and on *salvation from a state of sin*, as the free gift of God to the degenerate race of fallen Adam, not to a part of mankind, but to the whole race; a gift of which all might partake who should be willing to do so, by turning from their evil ways.

The power of turning* he truly asserts to be in every man from his birth, and therefore that he who does not obey the voice which calls him to repentance and reconciliation to God, will hereafter assent to the justice of his own condemnation.

The blessing of salvation from sin, with all other blessings, he asserts to be through Jesus Christ, of whose *nature* bread and wine are symbolical representations; memorials of the incarnation and death of the Saviour and Deliverer; and the means by which a present benefit is communicated to

* See Appendix, No. VI.

those who have faith to discern the Lord's body under the appointed representations.

If any look on the sacred rite as ordained in memorial of a past transaction *only*, and reject the belief of a present and substantial benefit, they are in error; and so, with great eloquence and power of argument, the author of the Demonstration testifies.

Those persons read Mr. Law's works with very little attention, or perhaps in part only,* who suppose his principles to be the same as those of Socinus. It is said of Socinians, that they deny original sin; that they deny the supernatural generation of the Saviour, the son of a virgin; that they deny his body to be the visible, and only visible Deity; or that he is Man-God and God-Man, *the Eternal Word and Power of Love clothed with humanity:* if they deny these venerable truths, their principles greatly differ from those of Mr. Law.

In the Treatise on Regeneration, in an Appeal to all who doubt, &c. in the Spirit of

* See Appendix, No. IX.

Prayer, in the Way to Divine Knowledge, and in the Spirit of Love,* Mr. Law uses all the powers of his enlightened mind to establish this great fundamental truth, that God is love. He writes copiously on the fall of the first father of mankind, knowing that the necessity for the belief of the greatness of the remedy is best proved by showing the greatness of the disease.

He states the consequences of the first act of disobedience in such a manner as it had never been stated before by any English writer, borrowing much from the blessed Behmen, an enlightened teacher of Germany, who wrote many works in the beginning of the seventeenth century.†

In order to show the importance of the Christian doctrines of repentance and reconciliation to God (which doctrines, taken together, may be specially called the Gospel ‡), and not to gratify his readers by new views of the history of creation and of the fall of angels and men, he says much

* See Appendix, Nos. VII. VIII. IX. X. XI.

† Ibid. No. X. (B.)

‡ ὁ λογος καταλλαγης.

respecting the original perfection of the first man, called in Sacred Scripture the Son of God, an holy creature, whose soul was breathed out of God: and to open the case more fully, he endeavours to show his readers how it comes to pass that nature, in a state of separation from God, is productive of evil, even of all imaginable evil; although nature, blessed by the divine influence of heavenly light and love, is productive of all that good which is hidden in the Deity, whose triune powers * make the Creator manifest in his works.

* The Author of these sheets prefers the use of the word *power* to the word *person*, lest any reader should suppose *person* to be applicable only to a visible object. In Sacred Scripture Jesus Christ is styled the expressed (or engraven) representation of God: "Ος ὢν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δοξης, καὶ χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ, φέρων τε τὰ πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ: Being the effulgence of his glory, and signature (or engraved representation) of his substance (or essence), and upholding all things by the word of his power. (Heb. ch. i. ver. 3.) Every reader of these Greek words must know that our English translation is faulty in using *person*, which word is derived from *persona*, a mask, and that from *per sonare*, because the voice of the actor passed through a conical tube, which was a part of the Roman mask.

After the fall of angels, and subsequent fall of man, that which should have reflected the glory of its Creator, being broken off from the source of life, became in the rebellious creatures wrathful and rapacious.

So copious are Mr. Law's writings on these points, that it may perhaps with truth be asserted, that on the subjects treated of, he has left nothing unsaid that could be beneficial to his readers. He exerts all his abilities to show that God is love; that all his acts in creation and redemption are acts of love; and that wrath, numbered in Scripture with other evil fruits of corrupt flesh and blood, cannot possibly exist in that holy Being whose will is one, and that a will of love towards all his offspring, indeed towards every thing that hath life.

That his reader's hope and trust may be more and more firmly fixed in his Creator and Redeemer, he proves that those systems of divinity which represent an outward atonement, or means of reconciliation, as necessary, in order to make God reconcilable to his creatures, in the same manner

that sacrifices were anciently thought to appease the Deity, are erroneous; proving at the same time that the means of reconciliation or atonement had its whole effect *in man*, making him, by change of nature and of mind, reconcilable to God. Be ye reconciled to God, says an Apostle, using the very word from whence atonement is derived.*

With respect to an inward means of atonement, or reconciliation to God, Mr. Law, in the most unequivocal manner, declares his belief, that through the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ alone, and by means of his sufferings on the cross, mankind can be delivered from a state of sin and misery; and that by supernatural generation, the suffering Saviour was the

* The English word at-one-ment is but once used in the New Testament, Rom. v. where it should be reconciliation, as in 2 Cor. v. ver. 19; *τὴν καταλλαγὴν ἐλάβομεν*, we have received the means of reconciliation, i. e. Jesus Christ, Rom. ch. v.: *κόσμον καταλλάσσων*, reconciling the world, 2 Cor. ch. v.: *τὸν λόγον της καταλλαγῆς*, the word of reconciliation, 2 Cor. ch. v.: *καταλλάγητε τῷ Θεῷ*, be ye reconciled to God, 2 Cor. ch. v.

only visible image of the invisible Creator of heaven and earth. He, with other true believers, acknowledged thankfully that the Word, by which all things were made, took our nature upon him in order to bring again unto his creatures, when fallen, that righteousness by which sinners can be made the children of God.

It is not the design of this Work to give a complete synopsis of all Mr. Law's valuable writings: if the reader will take the trouble of turning to the Appendix, he will find specimens, taken from his moral and spiritual works, sufficient to prove to him, that though Mr Law, *before all things*, thought change of heart and mind *necessary* to prepare sinful men, i. e. all men, for the kingdom of heaven, and that by assent to a creed alone, there could be no reconciliation to God; yet he was anxious to make it appear, that in doctrines he did not deviate from those of the Primitive Church; that he believed in one God, triune in operation, one in essence, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; Father or parental

power, generating; Son generated; Holy Spirit proceeding; these invisible powers uniting in the visible body of one Lord Jesus Christ, "God of God, Light of "Light;" that he believed in what is commonly called original sin, that all children come into the world wrathful, or children of wrath, and prone to excess in the use of every thing which this evil world contains: and although he abhorred that system which ascribes wrath to God, he knew that internal wrath in a future state will be the means of tormenting those who suffer condemnation.

From the letter of Scripture, some persons might suppose God to be a consuming fire, on full as good authority as some suppose our Heavenly Father to be wrathful. Fire and wrath are indeed his, in a good sense; for they are both instrumental in bringing about the designs of his love, as are his tempests and his frosts.

Those who love their neighbours, in the manner that they love themselves, by sincerely praying for their welfare, whether

friends or enemies, will certainly be inclined to believe what Mr. Law says of the purification of all human nature, by wishing it to be true: his own words * on the subject are better than any that can be given by another; to them therefore the reader is requested to refer.

The writer of this Memoir having now lightly touched on nearly all the subjects treated of largely by Mr. Law, concludes by saying, that if what has been written by him should induce one person to look into, relish, and benefit internally by writings which have been found by him a guide to rest, his labour will not be in vain, nor, he trusts, unrewarded in a better world by that good Master of whose vineyard the fruit is love.

Mr. Law was in stature rather over than under the middle size; not corpulent, but

* See Appendix, No. XIV. (A.)

stout-made, with broad shoulders; his visage was round; his eyes grey; his features well proportioned, and not large; his complexion ruddy, and his countenance open and agreeable. He was naturally more inclined to be merry than sad. In his habits he was very regular and temperate; he rose early, breakfasted in his bed-room alone on one cup of chocolate; joined his family in prayer at nine o'clock, and again, soon after noon, at dinner.

When the daily provision for the poor was not made punctually at the usual hour, he expressed his displeasure sharply, but seldom on any other occasion. He did not join Mrs. Gibbon and Mrs. Hutcheson at the tea-table, but sometimes eat a few raisins standing while they sat.

At an early supper, after an hour's walk in his field or elsewhere, he eat something, and drank one or two glasses of wine; then joined in prayer with the ladies and their servants, attended to the reading of some portion of Scripture, and at nine o'clock retired.

When the children of his nephew came to his house, as they often did, he was much pleased to see them, and to take them on his knee. The youngest of them now (anno 1813) lives at King's Cliffe, in the house which did belong to Mr. Law.

After speaking of Mr. Law's habits of temperance and regularity, the kind person of King's Cliffe, from whom the writer of these sheets received information respecting Mr. Law's way of life, says in a letter: "He "was fond of music, and on the day of the "annual audit of the accounts, stated by "those who managed the funds appro- "priated to the support of the charitable "institutions at Cliffe, entertained the trus- "tees with a concert, on which occasion "Mrs. Gibbon performed on the organ.

"He chose to eat his food from a "wooden platter, not from an idea of the "unnecessary luxury of a plate, but be- "cause it appeared to him that a plate "spoiled the knives."

He wore shirts intended for the poor as soon as made, after which they were washed for the first time, and distributed.

A new edition of an old translation of Behmen's works was printed at Mrs. Hutcheson's expense, and in part under Mr. Law's superintendance. The figures, *said* to have been *left* by Mr. Law, were not designed by him, but by a German, whose name was Andrew Freeher. Of Andrew Freeher there are several volumes of writings: it does not appear that any of them have been printed. The writer of these lines has reason to believe that they are in the British Museum, but that they are of little value. What is good in them may be found in the works of his master Behmen.

Mrs. Hutcheson died in January, 1781, aged 91.

Mrs. Gibbon died in June, 1790, aged 86.

The remains of Mr. Law were placed in a tomb built by Mrs. Gibbon.

When Mrs. Hutcheson died, her remains were placed, by her particular desire, *at the feet of Mr. Law*, in a new tomb.

Mrs. Gibbon was interred with Mr. Law.

THE ANGELS' HYMN,

SAID TO HAVE BEEN SUNG BY THE LATE REV. W. LAW, WHEN ON HIS DEATH-BED.

Thus Angels sang, and thus sing we,
To God on high all glory be !
Let him on earth his peace bestow,
And unto men his favour show.

Welcome sweet words, sweet words indeed!
In darkness light through them is spied;
Whate'er is needless, these we need:
Lord, let these words with us abide.

This day sets forth thy praises, Lord;
Our grateful hearts to thee shall sing,
Our thankful lips now shall record
Thine ancient love, Eternal King.

And let the Church with one accord
Resound Amen, and praise the Lord.
Hallelujah ! Hallelujah !
Hallelujah ! Hallelujah !

APPENDIX.

No. I.

On the Bangorian Controversy. From " SMOLLETT'S *History of England."*

IN the year 1717, the proceedings in the Convocation turned chiefly upon two performances of Dr. Hoadley, Bishop of Bangor. One was entitled, "A Preservative against the Principles and "Practices of the Non-jurors;" the other was a sermon preached before the king, under the title of "The Nature of the Kingdom of Christ." An Answer to this discourse was published by Dr. Snape, Master of Eton College, and the Convocation appointed a committee to examine the Bishop's two performances. They drew up a representation, in which the Preservative and the Sermon were censured, as tending to subvert all government and discipline in the Church of Christ; to reduce his kingdom to a state of anarchy and confusion; to impugn and impeach the royal supremacy in causes ecclesiastical, and the authority of the legislature to enforce obedience in matters of religion by civil sanctions. The government

thought proper to put a stop to these proceedings by a prorogation, which however inflamed the controversy. A great number of pens were drawn against the Bishop. But his chief antagonists were Dr. Snape and Dr. Sherlock, whom the king removed from the office of his chaplains, and the Convocation has not been permitted to sit and do business since that period.

No. II.

Testimony concerning Mr. Law *by* Edward Gibbon, *Esq.*

A life of devotion and celibacy was the choice of my aunt, Mrs. Hester Gibbon, who, at the age of eighty-five, still resides in a hermitage at Cliffe, in Northamptonshire, having long survived her spiritual guide and faithful companion, Mr. William Law, who at an advanced age, about the year 1761, died in her house. In our family he had left the reputation of a worthy and pious man, who believed all that he professed, and practised all that he enjoined. The character of a non-juror, which he maintained to the last, is a sufficient evidence of his principles in Church and State, and the sacrifice of interest to conscience will be always respectable. His theological writings, which our domestic connection has tempted me to peruse, preserve an imperfect sort of Life, and I

can pronounce with more confidence and knowledge on the merits of the Author. His last compositions *, and his discourse on the absolute unlawfulness of stage entertainments * * * * * * * * * * * * * But these sallies * * * * * * must not extinguish the praise which is due to Mr. Wm. Law as a wit and a scholar. His arguments are specious and acute;—his manner is lively;—his style forcible and clear;—had not his vigorous mind been clouded by enthusiasm, he might be ranked with the most agreeable and ingenious writers of the times. While the Bangorian controversy was a fashionable theme, he entered the lists on the subject of Christ's kingdom, and the authority of the priesthood. Against the Plain Account of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, he resumed the combat with Bishop Hoadley, the object of Whig idolatry and Tory abhorrence, and at every weapon of attack and defence, the non-juror, on the ground which is common to both, approves himself at least equal to the prelate. On the appearance of the Fable of the Bees, he drew his pen against the licentious doctrine, that private vices are public benefits, and morality as well as religion must join in his applause. Mr. Law's masterwork, the Serious Call, is still read as a popular and powerful book of devotion. His precepts are rigid, but they are founded on the gospel. His satire is sharp, but is drawn from the knowledge of human life; and many of his portraits are not unworthy the pen of La Bruyère. If he finds a spark of piety in his reader's mind, he will soon kindle it to a flame; and a philosopher must

allow that he exposes, with equal severity and truth, the strange contradiction between the faith and practice of the Christian world. Under the names of Flavia and Miranda, he admirably describes my two aunts, the heathen and the Christian sister.

No. III.

From a printed Account of the two charitable Foundations at King's Cliffe, in the County of Northampton. Dated, 1755.

In the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and forty-five, Mrs. Hutcheson set up a school in the town of King's Cliffe for the education and full clothing of eighteen poor boys of the town of King's Cliffe, with a salary for a master well qualified to teach them reading and writing, and all the useful parts of arithmetic.

Mrs. Hutcheson afterwards bought a schoolhouse for the master, built a school, and four little tenements adjoining to it, for the separate habitation of four ancient and poor widows, chosen out of the town of King's Cliffe, with a weekly allowance.

For the perpetual maintenance of these charities, the following estates have, by Mrs. Hutcheson's order and appointment, been conveyed, surrendered, and sold, for ever in trust, to G. Lynn of Southwick, W. Pain King of Fineshade,

Esqrs.; to the Rev. C. Bates of Easton; to the Rev. W. Piemont, Rector of King's Cliffe; to T. Jackson of Duddington, Gent.; to G. Law of Morehay, Gent.:

	£.	s.	d.
One moiety of a certain number of Closes in the county of Lincoln, let for	54	0	0
Land at Aslacton, in the county of Nottingham	53	0	0
Two Closes at King's Cliffe	18	10	0
Dealy's Closes	7	10	0
Buxton Close	7	0	0
Close near the school-house	8	0	0
	£.148	0	0

Donatus O'Brien of Blatherwick, Esqr. was, at the desire of Mrs. Hutcheson, added to the six trustees before-mentioned.

The school founded for the education and full clothing of fourteen poor girls of the town of King's Cliffe, was set up by Mr. Wm. Law, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and twenty-seven, with a salary for a mistress well qualified to instruct them in reading, knitting, and every useful kind of needlework.

He hath since built a school-house and school, and also two little tenements adjoining to the schools, to be inhabited separately by two poor ancient unmarried women or widows, of the town of King's Cliffe, with a weekly allowance hereafter mentioned.

For the perpetual support of these charities, he, the said W. Law, hath conveyed for ever in trust,

to G. Lynn of Southwick; to D. O'Brien of Blatherwick; to W. Pain King of Fineshade, Esqrs.; and to the Rev. C. Bates of Easton; to the Rev. W. Piemont, Rector of King's Cliffe; to T. Jackson of Duddington, Gent.; and to George Law of Morehay, Gent.

1. The aforesaid school and school-house, and the two little adjoining tenements.

2. One moiety of a certain number of closes at Northope, in Lincolnshire, let for fifty-four pounds per annum.

The gross annual income arising at present, Anno 1813, from Mr. Law's portion of the estates, amounts to sixty-nine pounds.

The gross annual income arising at present from Mrs. Hutcheson's portion of the estates, amounts to three hundred and eight pounds, eighteen shillings, and sixpence.

	£.	s.	d.
Mr. Law's	69	0	0
Mrs. Hutcheson's .	308	18	6
	£.377	18	6

The rise of rent, from fifty-four to sixty-nine pounds, at the end of fifty years, must appear small, when the increased price of the products of all lands is taken into consideration.

No. IV. (A.)

Exhortations to Devotion. From "A practical Treatise on Christian Perfection."

Whoever hath read the foregoing chapters with attention, is, I hope, sufficiently instructed in the knowledge of Christian perfection. He hath seen that it requireth us to devote ourselves wholly unto God, to make the ends and designs of religion, the ends and designs of all our actions; that it called us to be born again of God, to live by the light of his Holy Spirit,—to renounce the world and all worldly tempers,—to practise a constant, universal self-denial,—to make daily war with the corruption and disorder of our nature,—to prepare ourselves for divine grace by a purity and holiness of conversation,—to avoid all pleasures and cares which grieve the Holy Spirit, and separate him from us,—to live in a daily, constant state of prayer and devotion; and, as the crown of all, to imitate the life and spirit of the Holy Jesus.

It now only remains that I exhort the reader to labour after this Christian perfection. Was I to exhort any one to the study of poetry or eloquence, to labour to be rich and great, or to spend his time in mathematics or other learning, I could only produce such reasons as are fit to delude the vanity of men, who are ready to be taken with any

appearance of excellence. For, if the same person was to ask me what it signifies to be a poet, or eloquent, what advantage it would be to him to be a great mathematician or a great statesman, I must be forced to answer, that these things would signify just as much to him as they now signify to those poets, orators, mathematicians, and statesmen, whose bodies have been a long while lost among the common dust. For, if a man will be so thoughtful and inquisitive as to put the question to every human enjoyment, and ask what real good it would bring along with it, he would soon find that every success amongst the things of this life leaves us just in the same state of want and emptiness in which it found us. If a man asks, why he should labour to be the first mathematician, orator, or statesman? the answer is easily given, because of the fame and honour of such a distinction; but if he was to ask again, why he should thirst after fame and honour, or what good they would do him? he must stay long enough for an answer. For when we are at the top of all human attainments, we are still at the bottom of all human misery, and have made no farther advancement towards true happiness, than those whom we see in the want of all these excellencies. Whether a man die before he has writ poems, compiled histories, or raised an estate, signifies no more than whether he died an hundred or a thousand years ago.

On the contrary, when any one is exhorted to labour after Christian perfection, if he then asks, what good it will do him? the answer is ready,

that it would do him a good which eternity only can measure;—that it will deliver him from a state of vanity and misery,—that it will raise him from the poor enjoyments of an animal life,—that it will give him a glorious body, carry him, in spite of death and the grave, to live with God, be glorious among angels and heavenly beings, and be full of an infinite happiness to all eternity. If therefore we could but make men so reasonable, as to make the shortest inquiry into the nature of things, we should have no occasion to exhort them to strive after Christian perfection.

No. IV. (B.)

The last hour will soon be with you, when you will have nothing to look for, but your reward in another life, when you will stand with nothing but eternity before you, and must begin to be something that will be your state for ever. I can no more reach heaven with my hands, than I can describe the sentiments that you will then have; you will then feel motions of heart that you never felt before; all your thoughts and reflections will pierce your soul in a manner that you never before experienced; and you will feel the immortality of your nature, by the depth and piercing vigour of your thoughts: you will then know what it is to die,—you will then know that you never knew it before, that you never thought wor-

thily of it, but that dying thoughts are as new and amazing as that state which follows them.

Let me therefore exhort you to come prepared to this time of trial,—to look out for comfort whilst the day is before you,—to treasure up such a fund of good and pious works, as may make you able to bear that state which cannot be borne without them. Could I anyway make you apprehend, how dying men feel the want of a pious life,—how they lament time lost, health and strength squandered away in folly,—how they look at eternity, and what they think of the rewards of another life, you would soon find yourself one of those who desire to live in the highest state of piety and perfection, that by this means you may grow old in peace, and die in the full hopes of eternal glory.

No. V.

Exhortations to Devotion, and acquiescence under all Dispensations of Providence. From "A "Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life."

THERE is nothing wise, or holy, or just, but the great will of God. This is as strictly true in the most rigid sense, as to say, that nothing is infinite and eternal but God.

No beings, therefore, whether in heaven or on earth, can be wise, or holy, or just, but so far as they conform to this will of God. It is confor-

mity to this will, that gives virtue and perfection to the highest services of angels in heaven; and it is conformity to the same will, that makes the ordinary actions of men on earth become an acceptable service unto God.

The whole nature of virtue consists in conforming to, and the whole nature of vice in declining from, the will of God. All God's creatures are created to fulfil his will; the sun and moon obey his will, by the necessity of their nature; angels conform to his will by the perfection of their nature: if therefore you would show yourself not to be a rebel and apostate from the order of the creation, you must act like beings both above and below you; it must be the great desire of your soul, that God's will may be done by you on earth as it is done in heaven. It must be the settled purpose and intention of your heart, to will nothing, design nothing, do nothing, but so far as you have reason to believe that it is the will of God that you should so desire, design, and do.

'Tis as just and necessary to live in this state of heart, to think thus of God and yourself, as to think that you have any dependence upon him; and it is as great a rebellion against God, to think that your will may ever differ from his, as to think that you have not received the power of willing for him. You are therefore to consider yourself as a being that has no other business in the world, but to be that which God requires you to be; to have no tempers, no rules of your own; to seek no self-designs or self-ends, but to fill some place, and act some part, in strict conformity and thankful resignation to the divine pleasure.

To think that you are your own, or at your own disposal, is as absurd as to think that you created and can preserve yourself. It is as plain and necessary a first principle, to believe you are thus God's, that you thus belong to him, and are to act and suffer all in a thankful resignation to his pleasure, as to believe that in him you live and move and have your being.

Resignation to the divine will signifies a chearful approbation and thankful acceptance of every thing that comes from God. It is not enough patiently to submit, but we must thankfully receive and fully approve of every thing that, by the order of God's providence, happens to us.

For there is no reason why we should be patient, but what is as good and strong a reason why we should be thankful. If we were under the hands of a wise and good physician, that could not mistake, or do any thing to us but what certainly tended to our benefit, it would not be enough to be patient, and abstain from murmurings against such a physician; but it would be as great a breach of duty and gratitude to him, not to be pleased and thankful for what he did, as it would be to murmur at him.

No. VI.

On Universal Redemption. From "A Demonstration of the Errors of a Book called, "A plain Account of the Sacrament of the "Lord's Supper."

It is the fundamental doctrine, or rather the known foundation of all revealed religion, and the known foundation of all natural piety and goodness, that Jesus Christ is the second Adam; that he is a common head, or parent, or person, to all mankind, in the same manner as Adam is the common head, or parent, or person, to all mankind.

That a real birth, life, nature, and true man, is in the same truth and reality derived to us from this our second Adam, as a real birth and life and nature is derived to us from our first Adam; and that as without any figure, or metaphor of speech, we are all said to be born of Adam, and descended from him: so we are all in the same dependence upon our second Adam, really, and not figuratively, born of him, and have our descent from him, spirit of his spirit, life of his life, in the same truth and reality as every man has the nature of the first Adam.

And herein is seen the infinite depth of divine love and goodness to mankind, who, though they were by the condition of their creation to be derived from one head or parent, and to take his state of perfection or imperfection, yet were, by the

goodness and care of God for them, provided from the very beginning with a second parent, or common head, who, after the fall of the first, and the fallen state that he had brought upon his posterity, should be a common restorer, and put it in every man's power to have the same choice of life and death as the first man had; that so they who were lost before they were born, and were made inheritors of a miserable nature without their choice, might have a divine life restored to them in a second parent, which should not be in the power of any one to lose for them, but should depend entirely upon their own will and desire of it, upon their own faith and hope and hungering after it.

This eternal and immutable truth, worthy of being written in capital letters of gold, is the foundation of all revealed and natural religion, and a standing monument of God's universal goodness and love to all mankind, and such as is sufficient to make all men rejoice and give praise to God.

We all stand as near to the reasons and motives for receiving the gospel as they did to whom it was first preached. No one then did or could receive Jesus when he was on earth, but for the same reasons, that the sick, the lame, and the blind, sought to him to be cured; namely, because they felt their infirmities, and wanted to be relieved from them. But if this state of heart, or their sensibility of their condition, of what they were, and what they wanted, was then the only possible reason they could have for receiving Christ; then it

follows, that every man, of every age, has all the reasons for receiving or not receiving the gospel within himself, and stands just as near to, and just as far from the evidence of it, as those did who first heard it.

If you know of no burden or weight of sin, nor want any assistance to overcome it, the gospel has no evidence for you; and though you had stood by our Saviour, you had been never the nearer to it. But if you know your state, as the sick, the lame, and the blind, knew their state; if you groan under the power of sin, and are looking towards God for some assistance to overcome it, then you have all the reasons for receiving the gospel written in your heart, and you stand as near all its proper evidence, whether you were born in the last age, or seventeen hundred years ago.

Now if you don't know and feel, that the gospel has this foundation in you, that you have that fall and redemption in you that it teaches, then all external evidence of it can be of no use to you, because you are not the person that wants such a salvation.

But if you know that these two things are written in the frame of your nature, that evil and good, or the fall and the redemption, are at strife within you, and that you want some divine assistance to help you to overcome the evil that is in you, then the gospel needs no external evidence, because your heart is a witness of all the truth of it. For you are then only doing that in a lower degree, which the gospel teaches and enables you to do in a more perfect and prevailing manner.

No. VII.

On Faith, as the Means of Salvation from a State of Sin From "The Grounds and "Reasons of Christian Regeneration."

True faith is a coming to Jesus Christ to be saved and delivered from a sinful nature, as the Canaanitish woman came to him and would not be denied. It is a faith of love, a faith of hunger, a faith of thirst, a faith of certainty and firm assurance, that in love and longing, and hunger and thirst, and full assurance, will lay hold on Christ as its loving, assured, certain, and infallible Saviour and atonement.

It is this faith that breaks off all the bars and chains of death and hell in the soul: it is to this faith that Christ always says, what he said in the gospel, Thy faith hath saved thee; thy sins are forgiven thee; go in peace. Nothing can be denied to this faith, all things are possible to it; and he that thus seeks Christ, must find him to be his salvation.

On the other hand, all things will be dull and heavy, difficult and impossible to us; we shall toil all the night and take nothing,—we shall be tired with resisting temptations, grow old and stiff in our sins and infirmities, if we do not; with a strong, full, loving, and joyful assurance, seek and come

to Christ for every kind and degree of strength, salvation, and redemption. We must come unto Christ as the blind, the sick, and the leprous came to him, expecting all from him, and nothing from themselves. When we have this faith, then it is that Christ can do all his mighty works in us.

From the foregoing account, any one may be supposed already to see the nature and necessity of regeneration or the new birth. It is as necessary as our salvation. By our fall our soul has lost the birth of the Son of God in it; by this loss it is become a dark, wrathful, self-tormenting root of fire, shut up in the four hellish elements of selfishness, envy, pride, and wrath. Considered as a fallen soul, it cannot stir one step, or exert one motion, but in and according to these elements; therefore it is as necessary to have this nature itself changed, and to be born again from above, as it is necessary to be delivered from hell and eternal death.*

What is it that any thoughtful serious man could wish for, but to have a new heart, and a new spirit, free from the hellish self-tormenting elements of selfishness, envy, pride, and wrath? his own experience has shown him, that nothing human can do this for him, can take away the root of evil that is in him.

Therefore, to have the Son of God from heaven to redeem him by a birth of his own divine nature in him, must be a way of salvation, highly suited to his own sense, wants, and experience; because he finds that his evil lies deep in the very essence and

* Our salvation (*sc.* from a state of sin), says J. B. is in the life of Jesus Christ in us.

forms of his nature, and therefore can only be removed by the arising of a new birth or life in the first essences of it.

Some people have an idea or notion of the Christian religion, as if God was thereby declared so full of wrath against fallen man, that nothing but the blood of his only begotten Son could satisfy his vengeance.

Nay, some have gone such lengths of wickedness as to assert, that God had by immutable decrees reprobated and rejected a great part of the race of Adam to an inevitable damnation, to show forth and magnify the glory of his justice.

But these are miserable mistakers of the divine nature, and miserable reproachers of his great love and goodness in the Christian dispensation.

For God is love, yea all love, and so all love, that nothing but love can come from him ; and the Christian religion is nothing else but an open, full manifestation of his universal love towards all mankind. As the light of the sun has only one common nature towards all objects that can receive it, so God has only one common nature of goodness towards all created nature, breaking forth in infinite flames of love upon every part of the creation, and calling every thing to the highest happiness it is capable of.

The whole nature of the Christian religion stands upon these two great pillars ; namely, the greatness of our fall, and the greatness of our re-

demption. In the full and true knowledge of these truths, lie all the reasons of a deep humility, penitence, and self-denial; and also all the motives and incitements to a most hearty, sincere, and total conversion to God, and every one is necessarily more or less of a true penitent, and more or less truly converted to God, according as he is more or less deeply and inwardly sensible of these truths.

No. VIII. (A.)

On the Original of Man's Soul. From "An "Appeal to all that doubt or disbelieve the "Truths of the Gospel."

HEREIN also appears the high dignity and never-ceasing perpetuity of our nature. The essences of our souls can never cease to be, because they never began to be; and nothing can live eternally, but that which hath lived from all eternity. The essences of our souls were a breath in God before they became a living soul; they lived in God before they lived in the created soul, and therefore the soul is a partaker of the eternity of God, and can never cease to be. Here, O man, behold the great original and the high state of thy birth. Here let all that is within thee praise thy God, who has brought thee into so high a state of being.

Thou shouldest only will that which God willeth, only love that which he loveth, co-operate and unite with him in the whole form of thy life,

because all that thou art, all that thou hast, is only a spark of his own life and spirit derived into thee. If thou desirest, inclinest, and turnest to God, as the flowers of the field desire and turn towards the sun, all the blessings of the Deity will spring up in thee; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost will make their abode with thee. If thou turnest in towards thyself, to live to thyself, to be happy in the workings of an own will, to be rich in the sharpness and acuteness of thy own reason, thou choosest to be a weed, and canst only have such a life, spirit, and blessing from God, as a thistle has from the sun.

They who suppose the wrath and anger of God upon fallen man to be a state of mind in God himself, to be a political kind of just indignation, a point of honourable resentment, which the Sovereign Deity, as governor of the world, ought not to recede from, but must have a sufficient satisfaction done to his offended authority, before he can, consistently with his sovereign honour, receive the sinner into his favour, hold the doctrine of the necessity of Christ's atoning life and death in a mistaken sense. That many good souls may hold this doctrine in this simplicity of belief, without any more hurt to themselves, than others have held the reality of Christ's flesh and blood in the sacrament, under the notion of the transubstantiation of the bread and wine, I make no manner of doubt. But when books are written to impose and require this belief of others, as the only saving faith in the life and death of Christ, it is then an error that ceases to be innocent; for

neither reason nor scripture will allow us to bring wrath into God himself, as a temper of his mind, who is only infinite, unalterable, overflowing love, as unchangeable in love, as he is in power and goodness.

No. VIII. (B.)

On Reconciliation to God by the Life of Jesus Christ. From "An Appeal to all that doubt "or disbelieve the Truths of the Gospel."

Some people have much puzzled themselves and others with this question, How is it consistent with the goodness and equity of God to permit or accept the sufferings of an innocent person as a satisfaction for the guilt and punishment of criminal offenders? But this question can only be put by those who have not yet known the most fundamental doctrine of the gospel salvation; for, according to the gospel, the question should proceed thus, How is it consistent with the goodness and equity of God, to raise such an innocent mysterious person out of the loins of fallen man, as was able to remove all the evil and disorder that was brought into the fallen nature? This is the only question that is according to the true ground of our redemption, and at once disperses all those difficulties which are the mere products of human invention.

Would you farther know what blood it is, that has this atoning, life-giving quality in it? It

is that blood which is to be received in the holy sacrament. Would you know why it quickens, raises, and restores the inward man that died in paradise? The answer is, from Christ himself. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him, that is, he is born of my flesh and blood. Would you know why the Apostle saith, That he hath purchased us by his blood, Acts xx. 28: That we have redemption through his blood, Ephes. i. 7: Why he prays the God of peace, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, to make us perfect in every good work to do his will? It is because the Holy Jesus saith, Except we drink his blood, we have no life in us; and therefore the drinking his blood is the same thing as receiving a life of heavenly flesh and blood from him.

No. IX. (A.)

On original Sin, and on Salvation. From "The Spirit of Prayer."

From this short, yet plain and true account of this matter, we are at once delivered from a load of difficulties that have been raised about the fall of man and original sin. It has been a great question, How could the goodness of God punish so small and single an act of disobedience in Adam with so great a punishment? Here the sovereignty of God has been appealed to, and has set the matter

right; and from this sovereignty, thus asserted, came forth the systems of absolute election and absolute reprobation. But for our comfort it appears, that the question here put concerns neither God nor man, that it relates not at all to the matter, and has no existence but in the brains of those that formed it. For the action in which Adam's sin consisted, was such an act as in itself implied all that miserable change that came upon him, and so was not a small or single act of disobedience, nor had the least punishment of any kind inflicted by God upon it. All that God did on this transgression was mere love, compassion, and relief administered to it. All the sovereignty that God here showed, was a sovereignty of love to the fallen creature. So that all the volumes on this question may be laid aside, as quite beside the point. Another, and the greatest question of all, and which divines of all sorts have been ever solving, and yet never have solved, is this: How can it consist with the goodness of God to impute the sin of Adam to all his posterity? But here to our comfort again, it may be said, that this question is equally a vain fiction with the other, and has nothing to do with the procedure of God towards mankind. For there is no imputation of the sin of Adam to his posterity, and so no foundation for a dispute upon it. How absurd would it be to say, that God imputes the nature, or the body and soul, of Adam, to his posterity? for have they not the nature of Adam, by a natural birth from him, and not by imputation from God? Now this is all the sin that Adam's posterity have from him, they have only their flesh and

blood, their body and soul from him, by a birth from him, and not imputed to them from God. Instead therefore of the former question, which is quite beside the matter, it should have been asked thus: How was it consistent with the goodness of God that Adam could not generate children of a nature and kind quite superior to himself? This is the only question that can be asked with relation to God, and yet it is a question whose absurdity confutes itself. For the only reason why sin is found in all the sons of Adam is this: it is because Adam, of earthly flesh and blood, cannot bring forth an holy angel out of himself, but must beget children of the same nature and condition with himself. And therefore here again it may be truly said, that all the laborious volumes on God's imputing Adam's sin to his posterity, ought to be considered as waste paper.

But further, as it is thus evident, from the nature of Adam's transgression, that all his misery came from the nature of his own action, and that nothing was inflicted upon him from a wrath or anger in God at him, so is it still much more so, from a consideration of the divine nature. For it is a glorious aud joyful truth (however suppressed in various systems of divinity), that from eternity to eternity, no spark of wrath ever was or ever will be in the Holy Triune God. If a wrath of God was anywhere, it must be everywhere; if it burnt once, it must burn to all eternity. For every thing that is in God himself is boundless, incapable of any increase or diminution, without beginning and without end. It is as good sense, as consistent with the divine nature, to say, that God,

moved by a wrath in or from himself, began the creation, as that a wrath in God ever punished any part of it. Nature and creature is the only source from whence, and the seat in which, wrath, pain, and vexation, can dwell. Nor can they ever break forth either in nature or creature, but so far as either this or that has lost its state in God. This is as certain, as that storms and tempests, thunder and lightnings, have no existence in heaven. God, considered in himself, is as infinitely separate from all possibility of doing hurt, or willing pain to any creature, as he is from a possibility of suffering pain or hurt from the hand of a man. And this, for this plain reason, because he is in himself, in his Holy Trinity, nothing else but the boundless abyss of all that is good and sweet and amiable; and therefore stands in the utmost contrariety to every thing that is not a blessing, in an eternal impossibility of willing and intending a moment's pain or hurt to any creature. For from this unbounded source of goodness and perfection, nothing but infinite streams of blessing are perpetually flowing forth upon all nature and creature, in a more incessant plenty than rays of light stream from the sun; and as the sun has but one nature, and can give forth nothing but the blessings of light, so the Holy Triune God has but one nature and intent towards all the creation, which is, to pour forth the riches and sweetness of his divine perfections upon every thing that is capable of them, and according to its capacity to receive them.

No. IX. (B.)

On the mysterious Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. From "The Spirit of Prayer."

Let no one here think to charge me with disregard to the Holy Jesus, who was born of the Virgin Mary, or with setting up an inward Saviour in opposition to that outward Christ, whose history is recorded in the gospel. No: it is with the utmost fullness of faith and assurance, that I ascribe all our redemption to that blessed and mysterious person that was then born of the Virgin Mary, and will assert no inward redemption, but what wholly proceeds from, and is effected by that life-giving Redeemer, who died on the cross for our redemption.

Were I to say that a plant or vegetable must have the sun within it, must have the life, light, and virtues of the sun incorporated in it, that it has no benefit from the sun, till the sun is thus inwardly forming, generating, quickening, and raising up a life of the sun's virtues in it, would this be setting up an inward sun in opposition to the outward one? Could any thing be more ridiculous than such a charge? For is not all that is here said of an inward sun in the vegetable, so much said of a power and virtue derived from the sun in the firmament? So, in like manner, all that is said of an inward Christ, inwardly formed

and generated in the root of the soul, is only so much said of an inward life, brought forth by the power and efficacy of that blessed Christ that was born of the Virgin Mary.

No. IX. (C.)

On Salvation from a State of Sin. From "The "Spirit of Prayer."

HERE lies the whole reason of our falling short of the salvation of Christ; it is because we have no will to it.

But you will say, do not all Christians desire to have Christ to be their Saviour. Yes: but here is the deceit; all would have Christ to be their Saviour in the next world, and to help them into heaven when they die, by his power and merits with God. But this is not willing Christ to be thy Saviour; for his salvation, if it is had, must be had in this world: if he saves thee, it must be done in this life, by changing and altering all that is within thee, by helping thee to a new heart, as he helped the blind to see, and the lame to walk, and the dumb to speak. For to have salvation from Christ, is nothing else but to be made like unto him; it is to have his humility and meekness, his mortification and self-denial, his renunciation of the spirit, wisdom, and honours of this world, his love of God, his desire of doing God's will and seeking only his honour. To have these tempers

formed and begotten in thy heart, is to have salvation from Christ. But if thou willest not to have these tempers brought forth in thee, if thy faith and desire does not seek and cry to Christ for them, in the same reality as the lame asked to walk, and the blind to see, then thou must be said to be unwilling to have Christ to be thy Saviour.

No. X. (A.)

On the Love of Righteousness. From "The "Way to Divine Knowledge."

HERE now you have the test of truth, by which you may always know whether it be the spirit of God and the love of God that drives you. If your zeal is after this pure, free, universal goodness of God, then of a truth the spirit of God breatheth in you; but if you feel not the love of this pure, free, universal goodness, and yet think that you love God, you deceive yourself: for there is no other true love of God, but the loving that which God is.

Wherever the heart is weary of the evil and vanity of the earthly life, and looking up to God for an heavenly nature, there all are of the one true religion, and worshippers of the true God, however distant they may be from one another, as to time or place; not he that can best speak with the tongues of men and angels, but he that most loves God, that is, that most loves the goodness of the divine nature, he has most of God and the light of God within him.

No. X. (B.)

On the Writings of Jacob Behmen. From "The Way to Divine Knowledge."

Jacob Behmen may be considered, 1st, As a teacher of the true ground of the Christian religion; 2d, As a discoverer of the false Anti-christian Church, from its first rise in Cain through every age of the world, to its present state in all and every sect of the present divided Christendom; 3d, As a guide to the truth of all the mysteries of the kingdom of God. In these three respects, which contain all that any one can possibly want to know or learn from any teacher, he is the strongest, the plainest, the most open, intelligible, awakening, convincing writer, that ever was. As to all these three matters, he speaks to every one, as himself saith, in the sound of a trumpet: and here to pretend to be an explainer of him, or make him fitter for our apprehension, in these great matters, is as vain, as if a man should pipe through a straw to make the sound of a trumpet better heard by us.

There are two sorts of people to whom he forbids the use of his books, as incapable of any benefit from them, and who will rather receive hurt than any good from them. The first sort he shows in these words:—"Loving reader, if thou "lovest the vanity of the flesh still, and art not in "earnest purpose on the way to the new birth,

" intending to be a new man, then leave the above-
" written words in these prayers unnamed, or else
" they will turn to a judgment of God in thee."
Again, " Reader, I admonish you sincerely, if you
" be not in the way of the prodigal or lost son
" returning to his father again, that you leave my
" book, and read it not; it will do you harm.
" But if you will not take warning, I will be
" guiltless; blame nobody but yourself."

No. XI.

On the Will of Love. From " The Spirit of " Love."

The spirit of love has this original; God, as considered in himself, in his holy being, before any thing is brought forth by him or out of him, is only an eternal will to all goodness. This is the one eternal immutable God, that from eternity to eternity changes not, that can be neither more nor less, nor any thing else, but an eternal will to all the goodness that is in himself and can come from him. The creation of ever so many worlds or systems of creatures adds nothing to, nor takes any thing from, this immutable God: he always was, and always will be, the same immutable will to all goodness. So that as certainly as he is the Creator, so certainly he is the blesser of every thing created, and can give nothing but blessings, goodness, and happiness from himself; because he

has in himself nothing else to give. It is much more possible for the sun to give forth darkness, than for God to do, or be, or give forth any thing but blessing and goodness. Now this is the ground and original of the spirit of love in the creature: it is and must be a will to all goodness: and you have not the spirit of love till you have this will to all goodness, at all times, and on all occasions.

Oh! Sir, would you know the blessing of all blessings: it is this God of love dwelling in your soul, and killing every root of bitterness, which is the pain and torment of every earthly selfish love. For all wants are satisfied, all disorders of nature are removed, no life is any longer a burden, every day is a day of peace, every thing you meet becomes a help to you, because every thing you see or do is all done in the sweet gentle element of love. For as love has no by-ends, wills nothing but its own increase, so every thing is as oil to its flame; it must have that which it wills, and cannot be disappointed, because every thing naturally helps it to live in its own way, and to bring forth its own work. The spirit of love does not want to be rewarded, honoured, or esteemed; its only desire is to propagate itself, and become the blessing and happiness of every thing that wants it; and therefore it meets wrath, and evil, and hatred, and opposition, with the same one will, as the light meets the darkness, only to overcome it with all its blessings.

No. XII.

On the right way of embracing Christianity: From "A Confutation of Warburton's Defence of Christianity in the Divine Legation of Moses."

THERE are two ways of embracing Christianity; the one is as a sinner, the other as a scholar; the former is the way taught by Christ and his Apostles, the latter is the invention of men, fallen from the first spirit and truth of the Christian life under the power of natural reason and verbal learning—a change which has some likeness to that which happened to the good light of the heathen world. The original philosophers, who lived what they said, were succeeded by a race of sophists, who had no wisdom of philosophy, but that of discanting, disputing, and writing about what the philosophers had taught.

But as no man ever came to Christ, but because he was weary and heavy-laden with the burden of his own natural disorder, and wanted rest to his disturbed soul, so nothing can help man to find the necessity of coming to Christ, but that which helps him to find and feel a misery of sin and corruption, which in some the cares and pleasures of this life, and in others the happiness of finding themselves wits and polite scholars, never suffered them to feel before.

Our Lord's parable of the Prodigal Son con-

tains the whole matter between God and fallen man; it relates nothing particular to this or that person, but sets forth the strict truth of every man's state with regard to his Heavenly Father. For every son of Adam has every thing in him that is said of that prodigal, he has lost his first state and condition, as he did, is wandered as far from his Heavenly Father and country, has abused and wasted his Father's blessings, and is that very poor swineherd, craving husks in a land of famine, instead of living in the paradisaical glory of his Father's family; and of every reader of that parable it may be justly said, Thou art the man. And no son of Adam, do he what he will, can possibly come out of the poverty, shame, and misery of his fallen state, till he finds, feels, and confesses from the bottom of his heart, all that which the penitent prodigal found, felt, and confessed.

No. XIII. (A.)

On the Public Worship of God. From "A Collection of Letters."

Suppose, that in the settled service of the Church, certain prayers and petitions, not according to truth and righteousness, or suitable to the goodness of the evangelical spirit, are read; as prayers for success in unchristian wars, prayers for the destruction of our Christian brethren, called our enemies, thanksgivings for the violent slaughter and

successful killing of mankind ; when these are made parts of the Church service, are we, in obedience to the providence of God suffering things in Church assemblies to come to this pass, to unite and bear a part in such Church service ? My answer to all this shall be only personal ; that is what I would do myself in these supposed cases. As to the fore-mentioned supposed prayers, though I am present when they are read in the Church, I neither make, nor need I make them any more my own prayers than I make or need to make all the curses in the Psalms to be my own curses, when I hear both priest and people reading them in the Church as a part of divine service. Nor is there any more hypocrisy or insincerity in one case than in the other.

I join therefore in the public assemblies, not because of the purity or perfection of that which is done or to be found there, but because of that which is meant and intended by them ; they mean the holy public worship of God ; they mean the edification of Christians ; they are of great use to many people ; they keep the world from a total forgetfulness of God ; they help the ignorant and letterless to such a knowledge of God and the Scriptures as they would not have without them.

Every Church distinction is more or less in the corrupt state of every selfish, carnal, self-willed, worldly-minded, partial man, and is what it is, and acts as it acts, for its own glory, its own interest and advancement, by that same spirit which keeps the selfish partial man solely attached to his own will, his own wisdom, self-regard, and self-seeking. And all that is wanting to be removed

from every Church or Christian society, in order to its being a part of the Heavenly Jerusalem, is that which may be called its own human will, carnal wisdom, and self-seeking spirit; which is all to be given up by turning the eyes and hearts of all its members to an inward adoration, and total dependence upon the supernatural, invisible, omnipresent God of all spirits; to the inward teachings of Christ, as the power, the wisdom, and the light of God working within them every good, and blessing, and purity, which they can ever receive either on earth or in heaven.

Under this light I am neither protestant nor papist, according to the common acceptation of the words. I cannot consider myself as belonging only to one society of Christians, in separation and distinction from all others. It would be as hurtful to me, if not more so, than any worldly partiality. And therefore, as the defects, corruptions, and imperfections, which some way or other are to be found in all Churches, hinder not my communion with that under which my lot is fallen, so neither do they hinder my being in full union and hearty fellowship with all that is Christian, holy, and good, in every other Church division.

And as I know that God and Christ and holy angels stand thus disposed towards all that is good in all men and in all Churches, notwithstanding the mixture in them is like that of tares growing up with the wheat, so I am not afraid, but humbly desirous of living and dying in this disposition towards them.

No. XIII. (B.)

On the Divinity of Christ, and on the one Will of God. From "A Collection of Letters."

Had not Christ been real God as well as real man, he could have made no beginning in the work of our salvation; and had he not ended his life in such a sacrifice as he did, he could never have said, It is finished. He therefore who denieth the truth, the certainty, and the absolute necessity of these two essential points, is in the abomination of Socinianism, and is that very liar and antichrist described by St. John in his First Epistle.

To have recourse to a supposed wrath or vindictive justice, in a God incensed towards fallen man, in order to confute the Socinian, who denies the necessity and effects of Christ's death, is only opposing one great falsity with another.

For wrath has no more place in God, than love has in the devil. Wrath began with devils, hell, and fallen nature, and can have no possible existence any where or in any thing, but where devils, hell, and fallen nature have their power of working.

A vindictive wrath in God, that will not forgive till a satisfaction equal to the offence is made to it, sets the goodness of God in a lower state than that which has been found in thousands of man-

kind. The truth of the matter is this: the divinity of Christ, and his whole process through life and death, were absolutely necessary in the nature of the thing to raise man out of the death of sin into a heavenly birth of life. And the necessity of all this is grounded upon the certainty of man's fall from a divine into a bestial life of this world. The Socinian blasphemy consists in the denial of these points, the Deity of Christ and the fall of man, and the necessity of Christ's death. Our scholastic doctors own the fall of man, but know or own nothing of the true nature and depth of it. They own the truth of Christ's divinity, and the necessity of his sufferings, they plead for the certainty of these things from Scripture words, but see not into the ground of them, or in what the absolute necessity of them consists. Hence it is, that when opposed by Socinian reasoning, they are at a loss how to support these great truths, and are forced to humanize the matter, and to suppose such a vindictive wrath in God as usually breaks forth in great princes, when a revolt is made against their sovereign authority.

What a paltry logic to say, God is righteousness and justice as well as love, and therefore his love cannot help or forgive the sinner, till his justice or righteous wrath has satisfaction? Every word here is in full ignorance of the things spoken of. For what is love in God, but his will to all goodness? What is righteousness in God, but his unchangeable love of his own goodness; his impossibility of loving any thing but it, his impossibility of suffering any thing that is unrighteous to have any communion with him?

What is God's forgiving sinful men? It is nothing else in its whole nature but God's making him righteous again. *There is no other forgiveness of sin but being made free from it.*

No. XIII. (C.)

On Faith and Trust in the Divine Goodness. From "A Collection of Letters."

Would you have done with error, scruple, and delusion? Consider the Deity to be the greatest love, the greatest meekness, the greatest sweetness, the eternal unchangeable will to be a good and blessing to every creature; and that all the misery, darkness, and death of fallen angels and fallen men, consist in their having lost their likeness to this divine nature. Consider yourself, and all the fallen world, as having nothing to seek or wish for, but by the spirit of prayer to draw into the life of your soul rays and sparks of this divine, meek, loving, tender nature of God. Consider the Holy Jesus as the gift of God to your soul, to begin and finish the birth of God and heaven within you, in spite of every inward or outward enemy. These three infallible truths, heartily embraced, and made the nourishment of your soul, shorten and secure the way to heaven, and leave no room for error, scruple, or delusion.

As for the purification of all human nature, either in this world or some after-ages, I fully believe it ; and as to that of angels, if it is possible, I am glad of it, and also sure enough that it will then come to pass.

No. XIV.

On the Divine Goodness, and on mutual Election: From "An humble Address to the Clergy."

Love, goodness, and communication of good, is the immutable glory and perfection of the divine nature; and nothing can have union with God, but that which partakes of this goodness. The love that brought forth the existence of all things, changes not through the fall of its creatures, but is continually at work, to bring back all fallen nature and creature to their first state of goodness. All that passes for a time between God and his fallen creature is but one and the same thing, working for one and the same end; and though this is called wrath, that called punishment, curse, and death, it is all, from the beginning to the end, nothing but the work of the first creating love, and means nothing else, does nothing else, but those works of purifying fire, which must, and alone can burn away all that dark evil which separates the creature from its first created union with God. God's providence, from the fall to the restitution of all things, is doing the same thing, as when he

said to the dark chaos of fallen nature, Let there be light. He still says, and will continue saying the same thing, till there is no evil of darkness left in all that is nature and creature. God creating, God illuminating, God sanctifying, God threatening and punishing, God forgiving and redeeming, is but one and the same essential, immutable, never-ceasing working of the divine nature. That in God which illuminates and glorifies saints and angels in heaven, is that very same working of the divine nature which wounds, pains, punishes, and purifies sinners upon earth. And (N. B.) every number of destroyed sinners, whether thrown by Noah's flood or Sodom's brimstone into the terrible furnace of a life insensible of any thing but new forms of raging misery till judgment's day, must, through the all-working, all-redeeming love of God, which never ceases, come at last to know that they had lost and have found again such a God of love as this.

The election, which the systematical doctors have taken out of its place, and built into an absolute irreversible decree of God, has no other nature, no other effect or power of salvation, but that which equally belongs to our faith, hope, prayer, love of God, and love of our neighbour; and just so far as these divine virtues are in us, just so far we are the elect of God, which means nothing else but the beloved of God, and nothing makes us the beloved of God, but his own first image and likeness rising up again in us. Would you plainly know what is meant by being elected of God, the same is plainly meant, as when

the Scripture says, God heareth those only who call upon him, or that he can only be found by those who seek him, so he only elects those and that which elects him. Again, He that honoureth me, him will I honour, says God. He that loveth me, says Christ, shall be beloved of me and my Father. This is the mystery of election (N. B.) as it relates to salvation. At divers times and in sundry manners, God may have, and has had, his chosen vessels for particular offices, messages, and appointments; but as to salvation from our fallen state, every son of Adam is his chosen vessel, and this as certainly as that every son of Adam has the seed of the woman, the incorruptible seed of the word, born along with him; and this is God's unchangeable universal election, which chooses or wills the salvation of all men. For the ground of all union, communion, or love between God and the creature, lies wholly in the divine nature. That which is divine in man tends towards God, elects God; and God only and solely elects his own birth, nature, and likeness in man. But seeing his own birth, a seed of his own divine nature, is in every man, to suppose God by an arbitrary power willing and decreeing its eternal happiness in some, and willing and decreeing its eternal misery in others, is a blasphemous absurdity, and supposes a greater injustice in God, than the wickedest creatures can possibly commit against one another.

But truth, to the eternal praise and glory of God, will eternally say, that his love is as universal and unchangeable as his being; that his mercy over all his works can no more cease, than his omnipotence can begin to grow weak. God's mark of an universal salvation set upon all mankind,

was first given in these words, "The seed of the "woman shall bruise the head of the serpent." Therefore, wherever the serpent is, there his head is to be bruised. This was God's infallible assurance, or omnipotent promise, that all that died in Adam should have its first birth of glory again. The eternal Son of God came into the world, only for the sake of this new birth, to give God the glory of restoring it to all the dead sons of fallen Adam. All the mysteries of this incarnate, suffering, dying Son of God, all the price that he paid for our redemption, all the washing that we have from his all-cleansing blood poured out for us, all the life that we receive from eating his flesh and drinking his blood, have their infinite value, their high glory, and amazing greatness in this, because nothing less than these supernatural mysteries of a God-Man could raise that new creature out of Adam's death, which could be again a living temple and deified habitation of the Spirit of God.

FINIS.

J. Brettell, Printer,
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THREE

LETTERS

TO THE

Biſhop of BANGOR.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M. A.

The NINTH EDITION.

LONDON:

Printed for W. INNYS and J. RICHARDSON,
in *Pater-noſter-Row*. MDCCLIII.

THE

Bishop of BANGOR'S

LATE

SERMON,

AND HIS

LETTER to Dr. SNAPE in Defence of it,

ANSWER'D.

And the Dangerous Nature of some Doctrines in his *Preservative*,

Set forth in a

Letter to his Lordship.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M. A.

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My LORD,

THAT your Lordſhip may be prepared to receive what I here preſume to lay before you, with the greater Candor, I ſincerely profeſs, that it does not proceed from any Prejudice; but from certain Reaſons, upon which I find myſelf invincibly obliged to differ from your Lordſhip in Opinion.

To prevent all Suſpicion of my deſigning any thing injurious to your Lordſhip's Character in this Addreſs, I have prefixed, what otherwiſe I ſhould have choſen to conceal, my Name to it.

Your Lordſhip is repreſented as at the Head of a Cauſe, where every Adverſary is ſure to be reproach'd, either as a furious Jacobite, or Popiſh Bigot, or an Enemy to the Liberty of his Country, and the Proteſtant Cauſe. Theſe hard Names are to be expected, my Lord, from a Set of Men who diſhonour your Lordſhip with their Panegyricks upon your Performances;

formances; whoſe Praiſes defile the Character they would adorn.

When Dr. *Snape* repreſents your Lordſhip as no Friend to the good Orders, and neceſſary Inſtitutions of the Church, you complain of the ill Arts of an Adverſary, who ſets you out in falſe Colours, perverts your Words on purpoſe to increaſe his own *Imaginary Triumphs*. But, my Lord, in this, Dr. *Snape* only thinks with thoſe who would be counted your beſt Friends; and would no longer be your Friends, but that they conclude, you have declared againſt the Authority of the Church. Does your Lordſhip ſuppoſe, that the *T——ds*, the *H——ks*, the *B——ts*, would be at ſo much Expence of Time and Labour, to juſtify, commend and enlarge upon your Lordſhip's Notions, if they did not think you engaged in their Cauſe? There is not a Libertine, or Looſe-Thinker in *England*, but he imagines you intend to diſſolve the Church as a *Society*, and are ready to offer Incenſe to your Lordſhip for ſo meritorious a Deſign. It is not my Intention to reproach your Lordſhip with their Eſteem, or to involve you in the Guilt of their Schemes; but to ſhew, that an Adverſary does not need any Malice to make him believe you no Friend to the Conſtitution of the Church, as a Regular Society, ſince your greateſt Admirers every Day publiſh it by neceſſary Conſtruction to the World in Print. After

After a Word or two concerning a Paſſage in your Lordſhip's *Preſervative*, I ſhall proceed to conſider your Anſwer to Dr. *Snape*. In the 98th Page you have theſe Words: *But when you are ſecure of your Integrity before God,* —— *this will lead you* (*as it ought all of us*) *not to be afraid of the Terrors of Men, or the vain Words of Regular Uninterrupted Succeſſions, Authoritative Benedictions, Excommunications,* ——*Nullity, or Validity of God's Ordinances to the People upon Account of* Nicеties *and* Trifles, *or any other the like* Dreams.

My Lord, thus much muſt be implied here: Be not afraid of the Terrors of Men, who would perſuade you of the Danger of being in this, or that Communion, and fright you into particular Ways of worſhipping God, who would make you believe ſuch Sacraments, and ſuch Clergy, are neceſſary to recommend you to his Favour. For theſe, your Lordſhip affirms, we may contemn, if we be but ſecure of our Integrity.

So that if a Man be not a *Hypocrite*, it matters not what Religion he is of. This is a Propoſition of an unfriendly Aſpect to Chriſtianity: But that it is entirely your Lordſhip's, is plain from what you declare, p. 90. *That every one may find it in his own Conduct to be true, that his Title to God's Favour cannot*

not depend upon his actual being or continuing in any particular Method; but upon his real Sincerity in the Conduct of his Conscience. Again, p. 91. *The Favour of God follows Sincerity, consider'd as such, and consequently equally follows every equal Degree of Sincerity.* So that I hope I have not wrested your Lordship's Meaning, by saying, that, according to these Notions, if a Man be not a Hypocrite, it matters not what Religion he is of. Not only sincere *Quakers*, *Ranters*, *Muggletonians*, and *Fifth Monarchy-Men*, are as much in the Favour of God, as any of the Apostles; but likewise sincere *Jews*, *Turks* and *Deists*, are upon as good a Bottom, and as secure of the Favour of God, as the sincerest Christian.

For your Lordship saith, it is *Sincerity*, as *such*, that procures the Favour of God. If it be Sincerity, as such, then it is *Sincerity* independent and exclusive of any particular Way of Worship: And if *the Favour of God equally follows* every equal *Degree of Sincerity*, then it is impossible there should be any Difference, either as to Merit or Happiness, between a sincere *Martyr* and a sincere *Persecutor*; and he that burns the Christian, if he be but in earnest, has the same Title to a Reward for it, as he that is burnt for believing in Christ.

Your

Your Lordſhip ſaith, you can't help it, if People will charge you with * *Evil Intentions* and *Bad Views*. I intend no ſuch Charge: But I wonder, your Lordſhip ſhould think it hard, that any one ſhould infer from theſe Places, that you *are againſt the Intereſt of the Church of* England.

For, my Lord, cannot the *Quakers*, *Muggletonians*, *Deiſts*, *Preſbyterians*, aſſert you as much in their Intereſt as we can? Have you ſaid any thing for us, or done any thing for us in this *Preſervative*, but what you have equally done for them? Your Lordſhip is ours, as you fill a *Biſhoprick*; but we are at a loſs to diſcover from this Diſcourſe what other Intereſt we have in your Lordſhip: For you openly expoſe our Communion, and give up all the Advantages of it, by telling all ſorts of People, if they are but ſincere in their own Way, they are as much in God's Favour as any body elſe. Is this ſupporting our Intereſt, my Lord?

Suppoſe a Friend of King *George* ſhould declare it to all *Britains* whatever, that though they were divided into Five thouſand different Parties, to ſet up different *Pretenders*; yet if they were but ſincere in their Deſigns, they would be as much in the Favour of God, as

 thoſe

* Anſwer, p. 46.

thoſe who are moſt firmly attach'd to his *Majeſty*. Does your Lordſhip think, ſuch a one would be thought any great Friend to the Government? And, my Lord, is not this the Declaration you made as to the Church of *England?* Have you not told all Parties, that their Sincerity is enough? Have you ſaid ſo much as one Word in Recommendation of our Communion: Or, if it was not for your Church-Character in the Title-Page of this Diſcourſe, could any one alive conceive what Communion you was of? Nay, a Reader, that was a Stranger, would imagine, that he who will allow no Difference between Communions, is himſelf of no Communion. Your Lordſhip, for ought I know, may act according to the ſtricteſt Sincerity, and may think it your Duty to undermine the Foundations of the Church. I am only ſurprized, that you ſhould refuſe to own the Reaſonableneſs of ſuch a Charge.

Your Lordſhip hath cancell'd all our Obligations to any particular Communion, upon pretence of *Sincerity*.

I hope, my Lord, there is Mercy in ſtore for all ſorts of People, however erroneous in their Way of worſhipping God; but cannot believe, that to be a ſincere Chriſtian, is to be no more in the Favour of God, than to be a ſincere *Deiſt*, or a ſincere *Deſtroyer* of Chriſtians.

ſtians. It will be allowed, that Sincerity is a neceſſary Principle of true Religion; and that without it, all the moſt ſpecious Appearances of Virtue are nothing worth. But ſtill, neither common Senſe, nor plain Scripture, will ſuffer me to think, that when our Saviour was on Earth, they were as much in the Favour of God, who ſincerely refuſed to be his Diſciples, and ſincerely called for his Crucifixion, as thoſe who ſincerely left all and followed him. If they were, my Lord, where is that Bleſſedneſs of Believing ſo often mentioned in the Scripture? Or, where is the Happineſs of the Goſpel Revelation, if they are as well, who refuſe it ſincerely, as thoſe who embrace it with Integrity?

Our Saviour declared, that thoſe who believed, ſhould be ſaved; but thoſe who believed not, ſhould be damned. Will your Lordſhip ſay, that all Unbelievers were inſincere; or, that though they were damned, they were yet in the ſame Favour with God, as thoſe who were ſaved?

The Apoſtle aſſures us, *that there is no other Name under Heaven given unto Men, whereby they can be ſaved, but* Jeſus Chriſt. But your Lordſhip hath found out an Atonement, more univerſal than that of his Blood; and which will even make thoſe bleſſed and happy, who count it an *unholy Thing*. For

ſeeing it is *Sincerity, as ſuch*, that alone recommends us to the Favour of God, they who ſincerely perſecute this Name, are in as good a Way, as thoſe that ſincerely worſhip it. Has God declared this to be the only Way to Salvation? How can your Lordſhip tell the World, that Sincerity will ſave them, be they in what Way they will? Is this all the Neceſſity of Chriſt's Satisfaction? Is this all the Advantage of the Goſpel Covenant, that thoſe who ſincerely contemn it, are in as good a State without it, as thoſe that embrace it?

My Lord, here is no Aggravation of your Meaning. If Sincerity, as ſuch, be the only thing that recommends us to God, and every equal Degree of it procures an equal Degree of Favour; it is a Demonſtration, that Sincerity *againſt* Chriſt is as pleaſing to God, as Sincerity *for* him. My Lord, this is a Doctrine which no Words can enough decry. So I ſhall leave it, to conſider what Opinion St. *Paul* had of this kind of Sincerity. He did not think, when he perſecuted the Church, though he did it *ignorantly*, and in Unbelief, and out of Zeal towards God, that he was as much in the Favour of God, as when he ſuffer'd for Chriſt. *I am the leaſt*, ſaith he, *of the Apoſtles, not fit to be called an Apoſtle; becauſe I perſecuted the Church of Chriſt.* The Apoſtle does not ſcruple to charge himſelf with Guilt, notwithſtanding his Sincerity.

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A little Knowledge of human Nature will teach us, that our Sincerity may be often charged with Guilt; not as if we were guilty becauſe we are ſincere; but becauſe it may be our Fault that we are hearty and ſincere in ſuch or ſuch ill-grounded Opinions. It may have been from ſome ill Conduct of our own, ſome Irregularities, or Abuſe of our Faculties, that we conceive things as we do, and are fixed in ſuch and ſuch Tenets. And can we think ſo much owing to a *Sincerity* in Opinions, contracted by ill Habits and guilty Behaviour? There are ſeveral faulty Ways, by which People may cloud and prejudice their Underſtandings, and throw themſelves into a very odd Way of thinking; for ſome Cauſe or other *God may ſend them a ſtrong Deluſion, that they ſhould believe a Lye.* And will your Lordſhip ſay, that thoſe who are thus ſunk into Errors, it may be, through their own ill Conduct, or as a Judgment of God upon them, are as much in his Favour, as thoſe that love and adhere to the Truth? This, my Lord, is a ſhocking Opinion, and has given Numbers of Chriſtians great Offence, as contradicting common Senſe and plain Scripture; as ſetting all Religion upon the Level, as to the Favour of God.

The next thing that, according to your Lordſhip, *we ought not to be concerned at, is,*

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the vain Words of Regular and Uninterrupted Succeſſions, as Niceties, Trifles, and Dreams. Thus much ſurely is implied in theſe Words, that no kind of *Ordination* or *Miſſion* of the Clergy is of any Conſequence or Moment to us. For if the Ordination need not be *Regular*, or derived from thoſe who had Authority from Chriſt to Ordain, it is plain, that no one particular kind of Ordination can be of any more Value than another. For no Ordination whatever can have any worſe Defects, than as being *Irregular*, and not derived by a Succeſſion from Chriſt. So that if theſe Circumſtances are to be looked on as *Trifles* and *Dreams*, all the Difference that can be ſuppoſed betwixt any Ordinations, comes under the ſame Notion of *Trifles* and *Dreams*; and conſequently, are either Good alike, or Trifling alike. So that *Quakers*, *Independents*, *Preſbyterians*, according to your Lordſhip, have as much Reaſon to think their Teachers as uſeful to them, and as True Miniſters of Chriſt, as thoſe of the Epiſcopal Communion have to think their Teachers. For if *Regularity* of Ordination and *Uninterrupted Succeſſion* be mere Trifles, and nothing; then all the Difference betwixt us and other Teachers, muſt be nothing: for they can differ from us in no other reſpects. So that, my Lord, if Epiſcopal Ordination, derived from Chriſt, hath been contended for by the Church of *England*, your Lordſhip hath in this Point deſert-

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ed her: And you not only give up Epiſcopal Ordination, by ridiculing a Succeſſion; but likewiſe by the ſame Argument exclude any *Miniſters* on Earth from having Chriſt's Authority. For if there be not a Succeſſion of Perſons authorized from Chriſt to ſend others to act in his Name, then both Epiſcopal and Preſbyterian Teachers are equally *Uſurpers*, and as mere *Lay-men* as any at all. For there can't be any other Difference between the Clergy and Laity; but as the one hath Authority derived from Chriſt, to perform Offices which the other hath not. But this Authority can be no otherwiſe had, than by an Uninterrupted Succeſſion of Men from Chriſt, empower'd to qualify others. For if the Succeſſion be once broke, People muſt either go into the Miniſtry of their own Accord, or be ſent by ſuch as have no more Power to ſend others, than to go themſelves. And, my Lord, can theſe be called Miniſters of Chriſt, or received as his Ambaſſadors? Can they be thought to act in his Name, who have no Authority from him? If ſo, your Lordſhip's Servant might Ordain and Baptize to as much purpoſe as your Lordſhip: For it could only be objected to ſuch Actions, that they had no Authority from Chriſt. And if there be no Succeſſion of Ordainers from him, every one is equally qualified to Ordain. My Lord, I ſhould think it might be granted me, that the Adminiſtring of a Sacrament is an Action we

have no Right to perform, conſider'd either as Men, Gentlemen, or Scholars, or Members of a Civil Society. Who then can have any Authority to interpoſe, but he that has it from Chriſt? And how that can be had from him, without a Succeſſion of Men from him, is not eaſily conceiv'd. Should a private Perſon chuſe a Lord Chancellor, and declare his Authority good; would there be any thing but Abſurdity, Impudence and Preſumption in it? But why he cannot as well commiſſion a Perſon to act, ſign and ſeal in the King's Name, as in the Name of Chriſt, is unaccountable.

My Lord, it is a plain and obvious Truth, that no Man, or Number of Men, conſider'd as ſuch, can any more make a Prieſt, or commiſſion a Perſon to officiate in Chriſt's Name, *as ſuch*, than he can enlarge the Means of Grace, or add a New Sacrament for the Conveyance of ſpiritual Advantages. The Miniſters of Chriſt are as much poſitive *Ordinances*, as the Sacraments; and we might as well think, that Sacraments not inſtituted by him, might be Means of Grace, as thoſe paſs for his Miniſters, who have no Authority from him.

Once more, all things are either in common in the Church of Chriſt, or they are not. If they are, then every one may Preach, Baptize, Ordain, *&c.* If all things are not thus common,

common, but the Adminiſtring of the Sacrament, and Ordination, *&c.* are Offices appropriated to particular Perſons; then I deſire to know, how in this preſent Age, or any other ſince the Apoſtles, Chriſtians can know their reſpective Duties, or what they may, or may not do, with reſpect to the ſeveral Acts of Church-Communion, if there be no *Uninterrupted Succeſſion* of Authorized Perſons from Chriſt: For 'till Authority from Chriſt appears, to make a Difference between them, we are all alike; and any one may officiate as well as another. To make a Jeſt therefore of the *Uninterrupted Succeſſion*, is to make a Jeſt of Ordination; to deſtroy the ſacred Character, and make all Pretenders to it, as good as thoſe that are ſent by Chriſt.

If there be no *Uninterrupted Succeſſion*, then there are no Authoriz'd Miniſters from Chriſt; if no ſuch Miniſters, then no Chriſtian Sacraments; if no Chriſtian Sacraments, then no Chriſtian Covenant, whereof the Sacraments are the Stated and Viſible Seals.

My Lord, this is all your own. Here are no Conſequences palm'd upon you; but the firſt, plain, and obvious Senſe of your Lordſhip's Words —— and yet, after all, your Lordſhip aſks Dr. *Snape*, *Why all theſe Outcries againſt you* *? Indeed, my Lord, you

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* Anſwer, p. 40.

have only taken the main Supports of our Religion away: You have neither left us Prieſts, nor Sacraments, nor Church: Or, what is the ſame thing, you have made them all *Trifles* and *Dreams*. And what has your Lordſhip given us in the room of all theſe Advantages? Why, only *Sincerity*: This is the great Univerſal Atonement for all. This is that, which, according to your Lordſhip, will help us to the Communion of Saints hereafter, though we are in Communion with any body, or no body here.

The next Thing we are not to be afraid of, are, *The vain Words of Nullity and Validity of God's Ordinances*, *i. e.* whether they are adminiſter'd by a Clergyman or a Layman. This indeed I have ſhewn was included in what you ſaid about the Trifle of *Uninterrupted Succeſſion*. But, for fear we ſhould have over-looked it there, you have given it us in expreſs Words in the next Line.

Your Lordſhip tells Dr. *Snape*, That *you know no Confuſion*, Glorious *or* Inglorious, *that you have endeavoured to introduce* into the Church †.

My Lord, If I may preſume to repeat your own Words, *Lay your Hand on your Heart, and aſk yourſelf*, Whether the encouraging all manner

† Anſwer, p. 47.

manner of Diviſions, be not endeavouring to introduce Confuſion? If there were in *England* Five thouſand different Sects, has not your Lordſhip perſuaded them to be content with themſelves; not to value what they are told by other Communions; That if they are but ſincere, they need not have regard to any thiug elſe? Is not this to introduce Confuſion? What is Confuſion, but Difference and Diviſion? And does not your Lordſhip plainly declare to the World, that there is no need of uniting? That there is no particular Way or Method, that can recommend us more to the Favour of God, than another? Has your Lordſhip ſo much as given the leaſt Hint, that it is better to be in the Communion of the Church of *England*, than not? Have you not expoſed her Sacraments and Clergy; and, as much as lay in you, broke down every thing in her, that diſtinguiſhes her from Fanatical Conventicles? What is there in her, as a Church, that you have left untouch'd? What have you left in her, that can any way invite others into her Communion? Are her Clergy authorized more than others? For fear that ſhould be thought, you make a Regular Succeſſion from Chriſt, a *Trifle*. Are her Sacraments more regularly adminiſter'd? Leſt that ſhould recommend her, you ſlight the *Nullity or Validity of God's Ordinances*. Is there any Authority in her Laws, which enjoin Communion with her? Leſt this ſhould

be believed, you tell us, that our being or continuing in any particular Method (or particular Communion) cannot recommend us more to the Favour of God than another.

I muſt obſerve to your Lordſhip, that theſe Opinions are very oddly put in a *Preſervative from ill Principles*; or, *An Appeal to the Conſciences and common Senſe of the Laity.* Are they to be perſuaded not to join with the Nonjurors, becauſe no particular Prieſts, no particular Sacraments, no particular Communion, is any thing but a Dream and Trifle; and ſuch things as no way recommend us to the Favour of God more than others? Are the Nonjurors only thus to be anſwer'd? Is the Eſtabliſh'd Church only thus to be defended? Your Lordſhip indeed has not minced the Matter: But, I hope, the Church of *England* is to be ſupported upon better Principles, or not at all.

If I ſhould tell a Perſon that put a Caſe of Conſcience to me, that all Caſes of Conſcience are Trifles, and ſignify nothing; it would be plain, that I had given him a direct Anſwer: But if he had either Conſcience, or common Senſe, he would ſeek out a better Confeſſor.

Your Lordſhip tells Dr. *Snape*, that he ſaith and unſaith, to the *great Diverſion of the Roman*

Roman Catholicks *. But if your Lordſhip would unſay ſome things you have ſaid, it would be a greater Mortification to them, than all that ever you ſaid or writ in your Life.

To deny the Neceſſity of any particular Communion, to expoſe the Validity of Sacraments, and rally upon the Uninterrupted Succeſſion of Prieſts, and pull down every Pillar in the Church of Chriſt, is an Errand on which *Rome* hath ſent many Meſſengers. And the Papiſts are no more provoked with your Lordſhip for theſe Diſcourſes, than they were angry at *William Penn*, a reputed Jeſuit, for preaching up *Quakeriſm*. So long as they rejoice in our Diviſions, or are glad to ſee the City of God made a mere *Babel*, they can no more be angry at your Lordſhip, than at your Advocates.

Dr. *Snape* ſays, you repreſent the Church of Chriſt as a Kingdom, in which Chriſt neither acts himſelf, nor hath inveſted any one elſe with Authority to act for him. At this your Lordſhip cries, p. 22. *Lay your Hand upon your Heart, and aſk, Is this a Chriſtian, Human, Honeſt Repreſentation of what your own Eyes read in my Sermon?*

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* Anſwer, p. 46.

My Lord, I have dealt as ſincerely with my Heart as it is poſſible; and I muſt confeſs, I take the Doctor's Repreſentation to be Chriſtian and Honeſt. For though you ſometimes contend againſt Abſolute and Indiſpenſible Authority; yet it is plain, that you ſtrike at all Authority, and aſſert, as the Doctor ſaith, that Chriſt hath not inveſted any one on Earth with an Authority to act for him.

Page 11. You expreſsly ſay, *That as to the Affairs of Conſcience and eternal Salvation, Chriſt hath left no Viſible Human Authority behind him.*

Now, my Lord, is not this ſaying, that he has left no Authority at all? For Chriſt came with no other Authority Himſelf but as to Conſcience and Salvation, he erected a Kingdom which related to nothing but Conſcience and Salvation: And therefore they who have no Authority as to Conſcience and Salvation, have no Authority at all in his Kingdom. Conſcience and Salvation are the only Affairs of that Kingdom.

Your Lordſhip denies, that any one has Authority in theſe Affairs; and yet you take it ill to be charged with aſſerting, that Chriſt hath not inveſted any one with Authority for him. How can any one act for him, but in his

his Kingdom? How can they act in his Kingdom, if they have nothing to do with Conſcience and Salvation, when his Kingdom is concerned with nothing elſe?

Again, Page 16. your Lordſhip ſaith, that no one of them (Chriſtians) *any more than another, hath Authority either to make new Laws for Chriſt's Subjects, or to impoſe a Senſe upon the old ones; or to Judge, Cenſure, or Puniſh the Servants of another Maſter, in Matters purely relating to Conſcience.*

I can meet with no Divine, my Lord, either Juror or Non-Juror, High or Low, Churchman or Diſſenter, that does not think your Lordſhip has plainly aſſerted in theſe Paſſages, what the Doctor has laid to your Charge, *that no one is inveſted with Authority from Chriſt to act for him.*

Your Lordſhip thinks this is ſufficiently anſwered, by ſaying, you contend againſt an Abſolute Authority. You do indeed ſometimes join Abſolute with that Authority you diſclaim. But, my Lord, it is ſtill true, that you have taken all Authority from the Church: For the Reaſons you every-where give againſt this Authority, conclude as ſtrongly againſt any Degrees of Authority, as that which is truly Abſolute.

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Firſt, You diſown the Authority of any Chriſtians over other Chriſtians, becauſe they are the *Servants of another Maſter*, p. 16. Now this concludes as ſtrongly againſt *any* Authority, as that which is *Abſolute:* For no one can have the leaſt Authority over thoſe that are entirely under another's Juriſdiction. A ſmall Authority over another's Servant, is as inconſiſtent as the greateſt.

Secondly, You reject this Authority, becauſe of the Objects it is exerciſed upon, *i. e.* Matters purely relating to Conſcience and Salvation. Here this Authority is rejected, becauſe it relates to *Conſcience* and *Salvation*; which does as well exclude every Degree of Authority, as that which is Abſolute. For if Authority and Conſcience cannot ſuit together, Conſcience rejects Authority, *as ſuch*; and not becauſe there is this or that Degree of it. So that this Argument baniſhes all Authority.

Thirdly, Your Lordſhip denies any Church Authority, becauſe Chriſt doth not *interpoſe to convey Infallibility, to aſſert the true Interpretation of his own Laws* *. Now, this Reaſon concludes as full againſt *all Authority*, as that which is *Abſolute*. For if Infallibility is neceſſary to found an Obedience upon in Chriſt's

* Sermon, p. 15.

Chriſt's Kingdom, it is plain, that no body in Chriſt's Kingdom hath any Right to any Obedience from others, nor conſequently any Authority to command it; no Members, or Number of Members of it, being infallible.

Fourthly, Another Reaſon your Lordſhip gives againſt Church-Authority, is this; *That it is the taking Chriſt's Kingdom out of his Hands, and placing it in their own*, p. 14. Now this Reaſon proves as much againſt Authority in general, or *any Degrees* of it, as that which is *Abſolute*. For if the Authority of others is inconſiſtent with Chriſt's being King of his own Kingdom, then *every Degree* of Authority, ſo far as it extends, is an Invaſion of ſo much of Chriſt's Authority, and uſurping upon his Right.

The Reaſon likewiſe which your Lordſhip gives to prove the Apoſtles not Uſurpers of Chriſt's Authority, plainly condemns every Degree of Authority which any Church can now pretend to. *They were no Uſurpers, becauſe he then interpoſed to convey Infallibility; and was in all that they ordained: So that the Authority was his in the ſtricteſt Senſe* †. So that where he does not interpoſe to convey Infallibility, there every *Degree* of Authority is a *Degree* of Uſurpation; and conſequently, the preſent Church having no Infallibility, has

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† Anſwer, p. 38.

no Right to exerciſe the *leaſt Degree* of Authority, without robbing Chriſt of his Prerogative.

Thus it plainly appears, that every Reaſon you have offered againſt Church-Authority, concludes with as much Strength againſt *all* Authority, as that which is *Abſolute*. And therefore Dr. *Snape* has done you no Injury in charging you with the Denial of *All* Authority.

There happens, my Lord, to be *only* this Difference between your Sermon and the Defence of it, that That is ſo many Pages againſt Church-Authority, *as ſuch*, and This is a Confutation of the *Pope*'s *Infallibility*. It is very ſtrange, that ſo *clear a Writer*, who has been ſo long enquiring into the Nature of *Government*, ſhould not be able to make himſelf be underſtood upon it: That your Lordſhip ſhould be only preaching againſt the Pope; and yet *All the Lower Houſe of Convocation* ſhould unanimouſly conceive, that your Doctrine therein deliver'd, tended to *ſubvert all Government and Diſcipline in the Church of Chriſt*.

And, my Lord, it will appear from what follows, that your Lordſhip is even of the ſame Opinion yourſelf; and that you imagin'd, you had baniſh'd *all* Authority, *as ſuch*,

ſuch, out of the Church, by thoſe Arguments you had offer'd againſt an *Abſolute Authority*. This is plain from the following Paſſage, where you ridicule *that* which Dr. *Snape* took to be an *Authority*, though not Abſolute. When Dr. *Snape* ſaid, That no Church-Authority was to be obey'd in any thing contrary to the Reveal'd Will of God, your Lordſhip triumphs thus: *Glorious Abſolute Authority indeed, in your own Account, to which Chriſt's Subjects owe no Obedience, till they have examin'd into his own Declarations; and then they obey not this Authority, but him* *.

Here you make nothing of that Authority which is not *Abſolute*; and yet you think it hard to be told, that you have taken away all *Church-Authority*. That which is Abſolute, you expreſsly deny; and here you ſay, that which is not Abſolute, is nothing at all. Where then is the *Authority* you have left? Or how is it that Chriſt has impower'd any one to act in his Name?

Your Lordſhip fights ſafe under the Protection of the Word *Abſolute*; but your Aim is at all Church-Power. And your Lordſhip makes too haſty an Inference, that becauſe it is not *Abſolute*, it is none at all. If you aſk, Where you have made this Inference, it is on occaſion of the above-mentioned Triumph;

* Anſwer, p. 27.

where your Lordſhip makes it an inſignificant Authority, which is only to be obey'd ſo long as it is not contrary to Scripture.

Your Lordſhip ſeems to think all is loſt, as to Church-Power; becauſe the Doctor does not claim an *Abſolute one*, but allows it to be ſubject to Scripture: As if *all* Authority was *Abſolute*, or elſe nothing at all. I ſhall therefore conſider the Nature of this Church-Power, and ſhew, that though it is not *Abſolute*, yet it is a *Real Authority*, and is not ſuch a mere Notion as your Lordſhip makes it.

An *Abſolute Authority*, according to your Lordſhip is, what is to be always obeyed by every Individual that is ſubject to it, in all Circumſtances. This is an Authority that we utterly deny to the Church. But, I preſume, there may be an *Authority* inferior to this, which is nevertheleſs a *Real Authority*, and is to be eſteemed as ſuch, and that for theſe Reaſons:

Firſt, I hope it will be allowed me, that our Saviour came into the World with Authority. But it was not lawful for the *Jews* to receive him, if they thought his Appearance not agreeable to thoſe Marks and Characters they had of him in their Scriptures. May not I here ſay, my Lord, *Glorious Authority*

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of Chriſt indeed, to which the Jews *owed no Obedience, till they had examin'd their Scriptures; and then they obey, not Him, but Them!*

Again; The Apoſtles were ſent into the World with Authority: But yet, thoſe who thought their Doctrines unworthy of God, and unſuitable to the Principles of Natural Religion, were obliged not to obey them. *Glorious Authority indeed of the Apoſtles, to whom Mankind owed no Obedience, till they had firſt examined their own Notions of God and Religion; and then they obeyed, not the Apoſtles, but Them.*

I hope, my Lord, it may be allow'd, that the Sacraments are Real Means of Grace: But it is certain they are only *conditionally* ſo, if thoſe that partake of them are endowed with ſuitable Diſpoſitions of Piety and Virtue. *Glorious Means of Grace of the Sacraments, which is only obtained by ſuch pious Diſpoſitions; and then it is owing to the* Diſpoſitions, *and not the* Sacraments. Now, my Lord, if there can be ſuch a thing as inſtituted *Real* Means of Grace, which are only *conditionally apply'd*, I cannot ſee, why there may not be an inſtituted Real Authority in the Church, which is only to be *conditionally* obeyed.

Your

Your Lordſhip has written a great many Elaborate Pages to prove the *Engliſh* Government Limited; and that no Obedience is due to it, but whilſt it preſerves our Fundamentals; and, I ſuppoſe, the People are to judge for themſelves, whether theſe are ſafe, or not. *Glorious Authority of the* Engliſh *Government, which is to be obey'd no longer than the People think it their Intereſt to obey it!*

Will your Lordſhip ſay, There is *no Authority* in the *Engliſh* Government, becauſe only a *conditional Obedience* is due to it, whilſt we think it ſupports our Fundamentals? Why then muſt the *Church-Authority* be reckoned nothing at all, becauſe only a *Rational Conditional* Obedience is to be paid, whilſt we think it not contrary to Scripture? Is a Limited, Conditional Government in the State, ſuch a Wiſe, Excellent, and Glorious Conſtitution? And is the ſame Authority in the Church, ſuch Abſurdity, Nonſenſe, and nothing at all, as to any actual Power?

If there be ſuch a thing as Obedience upon Rational Motives, there muſt be ſuch a thing as Authority that is not Abſolute, or that does not require a *Blind, Implicit* Obedience. Indeed, Rational Creatures can obey no other Authority; they muſt have Reaſons for what they do. And yet becauſe the Church

Church claims only this *Rational* Obedience, your Lordſhip explodes *ſuch* Authority as none at all.

Yet it muſt be granted, that *no other* Obedience was due to the *Prophets*, or our *Saviour* and his *Apoſtles:* They were only to be obey'd by thoſe who Thought their Doctrines *worthy* of God. So that if the Church has *no* Authority, becauſe we muſt firſt conſult the Scriptures before we obey it; neither our Saviour, nor his Apoſtles, had *any Authority*, becauſe the *Jews* were firſt to conſult their Scriptures, and the *Heathens* their Reaſon, before they obey'd 'em. And yet this is all that is ſaid againſt *Church-Authority*; That becauſe they are to judge of the *Lawfulneſs* of its Injunctions, therefore they owe it no Obedience: Which falſe Concluſion I hope is enough expoſed.

If we think it unlawful to do any thing that the Church requires of us, we muſt not obey its Authority. So, if we think it unlawful to ſubmit to any Temporal Government, we are not to comply. But, I hope, it will not follow, that the Government has *no Authority*, becauſe ſome think it unlawful to comply with it. If we are ſo unhappy as to judge wrong in any Matter of Duty, we muſt nevertheleſs act according to our Judgments; and the Guilt of Diſobedience either

in

in *Church* or *State*, is more or leſs, according as our Error is more or leſs voluntary, and occaſioned by our own Miſmanagement.

I believe I have ſhewn, Firſt, That all your Lordſhip's Arguments againſt *Church-Authority*, conclude with the ſame Force againſt *all* Degrees of Authority: Secondly, That though *Church-Authority* be not Abſolute in a *certain Senſe*; yet if our Saviour and his Apoſtles had any Authority, the Church may have a *Real Authority*: For neither he, nor his Apoſtles, had *ſuch* an *Abſolute* Authority, as excludes all *Conſideration* and *Examination*: Which is your Notion of *Abſolute* Authority.

Before I leave this Head, I muſt obſerve, that in this very Anſwer to Dr. *Snape*, where you would be thought to have expoſed *this Abſolute* Authority *alone*, you exclude *all* Authority along with it. You aſk the Doctor *, *Is this the whole you can make of it, after all your boaſted Zeal for* Mere Authority? You then ſay, *Why may not I be allowed to ſay, No Man on Earth hath an* Abſolute Authority, *as well as you?* My Lord, there can be no underſtanding of this, unleſs *Mere Authority* and *Abſolute Authority* be taken for the ſame thing by your Lordſhip.

But,

* Anſwer, p. 26.

But, my Lord, is not the ſmalleſt *Particle* of Matter, *Mere Matter?* And is it therefore the ſame as the *Whole Maſs* of Matter? Is an Inch of Space, becauſe it is *Mere Space*, the ſame as *Infinite* Space? How comes it then, that *Mere* Authority is the ſame as *Abſolute* Authority? My Lord, *Mere* Authority implies *only* Authority, as a *Mere* Man implies *only* a Man: But your Lordſhip makes no Difference between *this*, and Abſolute Authority; and therefore hath left *no* Authority in the Church, unleſs there be Authority, that is not *Mere Authority*, i. e. Matter that is not *Mere Matter*; or Space that is not *Mere Space*.

When the Church enjoins Matters of Indifference, is ſhe obeyed for any Reaſon, but for her *Mere* Authority? But your Lordſhip allows no Obedience to *Mere Authority*; and therefore no Obedience even in Indifferent Matters.

Thus do theſe Arguments of yours lay all waſte in the Church: And I muſt not omit *one*, my Lord, which falls as heavy upon the *State*, and makes all *Civil Government* unlawful. Your Words are theſe: *As the Church of Chriſt is the Kingdom of Chriſt, He himſelf is King; and in this it is imply'd, that He is the* ſole *Law-giver to his* Subjects,

and Himſelf the ſole *Judge of their Behaviour in the Affairs of Conſcience and Salvation.* If there be any *Truth* or Force in this Argument, it concludes with the ſame *Truth* and *Force* againſt all Authority in the *Kingdoms* of this World. In Scripture we are told, *the Moſt High ruleth in the Kingdom of Men,* (Dan. iv. 17.) *that the Lord is our Law-giver, the Lord is our King,* (Iſa. xxxiii. 22.) Now, if becauſe Chriſt is *King* of the Church, it muſt be in *this imply'd,* that he is *ſole* Law-giver to his *Subjects*; it is plain to a Demonſtration, that becauſe *God* is *King* and *Law-giver* to the whole Earth, that therefore *He* is *ſole Law-giver* to his *Subjects*; and conſequently, that *all Civil Authority, all Human Laws,* are mere *Invaſions* and *Uſurpations* upon God's Authority, as *King* of the whole Earth.

Is no body to have any Juriſdiction in *Chriſt's Kingdom, becauſe* He is *King* of it? How then comes any one to have *any* Authority in the *Kingdoms* of this World, when God has declared himſelf the *Law-giver,* and *King* of the whole World? Will your Lordſhip ſay, that Chriſt hath left us the *Scriptures,* as the *Statute-Laws* of his *Kingdom,* to prevent the Neceſſity of *After-Laws?* It may be anſwer'd, That God has given us *Reaſon* for our conſtant Guide; which, if it were as duly attended to, would as *certainly* anſwer

anſwer the *Ends* of *Civil Life*, as the Obſervance of the Scriptures would make us good Chriſtians.

But, my Lord, as human Nature, if left to itſelf, would neither anſwer the *Ends* of a *Spiritual* or *Civil* Society; ſo a *conſtant Viſible* Government in both, is *equally* neceſſary: And, I believe, it appears to all unprejudiced Eyes, that in this Argument *at leaſt*, your Lordſhip has declared both *equally Unlawful.*

Your Lordſhip ſaith †, *The Excluſion of the Papiſts from the Throne, was not upon the Account of their Religion.* Three Lines after you ſay, *I have contended indeed elſewhere, that it was their unhappy Religion which* alone *made them uncapable in themſelves, of governing this Proteſtant Nation by the Laws of the Land.* My Lord, I can't reconcile theſe two Paſſages. *Popery alone*, you ſay, was their *Incapacity.* From which it may be inferred, they had *no other Incapacity.* Yet your Lordſhip ſaith, They were not excluded upon the Account of their *Religion.* A little after you ſay, *The Ground of their Excluſion was not their Religion, conſider'd* as ſuch; *but the Fatal, Natural, Certain Effects of it upon themſelves to our Deſtruction.*

† Anſwer, p. 25.

As for Inſtance, your Lordſhip may mean thus: If a *Man* of a *great Eſtate* dies, he loſes his *Right* to his Eſtate; not upon the Account of *Death*, conſider'd *as ſuch*; but for the *Certain, Fatal, Natural Effect* of it upon himſelf. Or, ſuppoſe a Perſon be excluded for being an *Idiot*; it is not for his Idiocy, conſider'd *as ſuch*; but for the *Certain, Fatal, Natural Effect of it* upon himſelf to our Deſtruction.

My Lord, this is prodigious deep: I wiſh it be clear; or, that it be not too refined a Notion for common Uſe on this Subject. Likewiſe I do not conceive, my Lord, what you can call the *Fatal, Natural, Certain Effects* of any one's Religion. I am ſure, among *Proteſtants* there are no *Natural, Certain Effects* of their Religion upon them; that their Practices don't *Fatally* follow their Principles: Neither is there any demonſtrative Certainty, that a *Biſhop* cannot be againſt *Epiſcopacy*.

If the *Papiſts* are ſo *unalterably ſincere* in their Religion, that we can prove their *certain* Obſervation of it, it's pity but they had our Principles, and we had their Practice. I have not that good Opinion of the Papiſts, which your Lordſhip hath: I believe ſeveral of them ſit as looſe to their Religion, *as other Folks*.

Does

Does your Lordſhip think, that all *Papiſts* are alike? That natural Temper, Ambition and Education, don't make as much Difference amongſt them, as the *ſame things* do amongſt us? Are all *Proteſtants* looſe and libertine alike? Why ſhould all *Papiſts* be the ſame Zealots? If not, my Lord, then theſe *Effects* you call *Fatal*, *Natural*, and *Certain*, may be not to be depended upon.

Your Lordſhip knows, that it was generally believed, that King *Charles* the Second was a *Papiſt:* But I never heard of any *Fatal, Natural, and Certain Effects of his Religion upon him.* All that one hears of it is, that he liv'd like a *Proteſtant*, and dy'd like a *Papiſt.* I ſuppoſe your Lordſhip will allow, that ſeveral who were lately *Papiſts*, are now true *Proteſtants.* I deſire therefore to know, what is become of the *Fatal, Certain, and Natural Effects of their Religion?*

My Lord, I beg of you to lay your Hand again upon your Heart, and aſk, Whether this be ſtrict Reaſoning? Whether it is poſſible in the very Nature of the thing, *that ſuch Fatal, Natural, and Certain Effects ſhould follow ſuch a Giddy, Whimſical, Uncertain* Thing, as *Human and Free Choice?* My Lord, is it neither poſſible for Papiſts to change or conceal their Religion for Intereſt,

or

or leave it through a conſcientious Conviction? If the former is impoſſible, then, according to your Lordſhip, it is the *ſafeſt Religion* in the World; becauſe they are all ſure of being *ſincere*, and conſequently, the Firſt Favourites of God. If the latter is impoſſible, then a great many fine Sermons and Diſcourſes have been written to as wiſe Purpoſes, as if they had been directed to the Wind.

I come now to your Lordſhip's Definition of *Prayer*, a *Calm and Undiſturbed Addreſs to God*. It ſeems very ſtrange, that ſo great a Maſter of Words as your Lordſhip, ſhould pick out Two ſo very exceptionable, that all your Lordſhip's Skill could not defend them, but by leaving their firſt and obvious Senſe. Who would not take *Calm* and *Undiſturbed* to be very like *Quiet* and *Unmoved?* Yet your Lordſhip diſlikes thoſe Expreſſions. But if theſe do not give us a true *Idea* of *Prayer*, you have made a very narrow Eſcape, and have given us a Definition of *Prayer* as near to a *wrong one* as poſſible.

Prayer chiefly conſiſteth of *Confeſſion* and *Petition*. Now, to be *Calm*, and free from all *worldly Paſſions*, is a neceſſary Temper to the right Diſcharge of ſuch Duties: But why our *Confeſſion* muſt be ſo *Calm*, and free from all *Perturbation* of Spirit; why our *Petitions* may not have all that Fervour and Warmth, with

with which either *Nature* or *Grace* can ſupply them, is very ſurprizing.

My Lord, we are adviſed to be *Dead to the World*; and I humbly ſuppoſe, no more is *implied* in it, than to keep our Affections from being too much engaged in it; and that a *Calm, Undiſturbed*, i. e. *Diſpaſſionate* Uſe of the World is very *conſiſtent* with our being dead to it. If ſo, then this *Calm, Undiſturbed Addreſs to Heaven*, is a kind of *Prayer* that is very conſiſtent with our being *dead to Heaven*.

We are forbid to *love* the World; and yet no greater *Abſtraction* from it is required, than to uſe it *Calm and Undiſturb'd*. We are commanded to *ſet our Affections on Things above*; and yet, according to your Lordſhip, the *ſame Calm, Undiſturbed Temper is enough*. According to this therefore we are to be *affected*, or rather *unaffected* alike, with *this* and the *next* World; ſince we are to be *Calm* and *Undiſturb'd* with reſpect to *both*.

The Reaſon your Lordſhip offers for this *Definition* of Prayer, is this; becauſe you * *look upon Calmneſs and Undiſturbedneſs to be the* Ornament and Defence of *human Underſtanding in all its Actions*. My Lord, this plainly ſuppoſes, there is no ſuch thing as the *Right*

* Anſwer, p. 11.

Right Uſe of our *Paſſions:* For if we could ever uſe them to any Advantage, then it could not be the Ornament of our Nature to be *diſpaſſionate alike* in *all* its Actions. It is as much the *Ornament* and *Defence* of our Nature, to be differently *affected* with Things according to their *reſpective* Differences, as 'tis to underſtand or conceive *different Things* according to their real Difference. It would be no *Ornament* or *Credit* to us, to conceive no Difference betwixt a *Mountain* and a *Mole-Hill:* And our Rational Nature is as much diſgraced, when we are no more *affected* with *great* Things than with *ſmall.* It is the Eſſential *Ornament* of our Nature, to be as ſenſibly *affected* in a different Manner with the different Degrees of Goodneſs of Things, as 'tis to perceive exactly the different *Natures* or Relations of Things. *Paſſion* is no more a Crime, *as ſuch*, than the *Underſtanding* is, *as ſuch.* 'Tis nothing but miſtaking the *Value* of Objects, that makes it criminal. An *Infinite Good* cannot be too *paſſionately* deſir'd, nor a *Real Evil* too *vehemently* abhorr'd. *Mere Philoſophy*, my Lord, would teach us, that the Dignity of *Human Nature* is beſt declared by a *Pungent Uneaſineſs* for the *Miſery* of Sin, and a *paſſionate warm Application* to Heaven for Aſſiſtance.

Let us now conſult the Scripture. St. *Paul* deſcribes a *godly Sorrow* ſomething different from

from your Lordſhip's *Calm* and *Undiſturbed Temper*, in theſe Words: *When ye ſorrowed after a godly ſort, what* Carefulneſs *it wrought in you! Yea, what* Indignation, *yea, what* Fear, *yea, what* Zeal, *yea, what* Revenge! (2 Cor. vii. 11.) My Lord, I ſuppoſe *theſe* are not ſo many Words for *Calm* and *Undiſturbed*. Yet, as different as they are, the Apoſtle makes them the *Qualities* of a *godly Sorrow*. And all this, at the Expence of that *Calmneſs* which your Lordſhip terms the *Ornament* of human Nature. Dr. *Snape* pleads for the *Fervency* and *Ardour* of our Devotions, from our *Saviour's praying more earneſtly* before his *Paſſion*.

Your Lordſhip replies, that *this* can give no Directions as to our *daily Prayers*; becauſe it was what our *Saviour* himſelf knew nothing of, but this once. The Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* knew nothing of this way of Reaſoning. For, as an Argument for *daily Patience*, he bids us look to *Jeſus*, who endured the *Croſs*, becauſe he died for us, leaving us an *Example*.

Our Saviour, my Lord, *ſuffered* and *died* but *once*; yet is it made a Reaſon for our *daily Patience*, and propoſed as an Example for us to imitate.

If therefore, my Lord, his Paſſion, ſo *extraordinary* in itſelf, and as much above the Power of human Nature to bear, as the *Intenſeneſs* of his Devotions *exceeded* our Capacities for Prayer, be yet propoſed as an *Example* to us in the *ordinary* Calamities of Life; how comes it, that *his Devotion* at that time ſhould have no manner of Uſe or Direction in it as to our Devotions, eſpecially in our *Diſtreſs?* How comes it, that his Suffering ſhould have ſo much of Example in it, ſo much to be imitated; but the Manner of his *Devotion then* have nothing of Inſtruction, nothing that need be imitated by us? All the Reaſon that is offer'd, is the *Singularity* and *Extraordinarineſs* of it, when the ſame may be ſaid of his *Paſſion*; yet that is allowed to be an *Example*.

Your Lordſhip is pleaſed, for the Information of your *Unwary Readers*, to reaſon thus upon the Place: *If this be the Example of our Saviour*, to aſſure us of his *Will about the Temper* neceſſary *to* Prayer, *it will follow, that our Bleſſed Lord Himſelf never truly prayed before this time: And yet again, if he prayed more earneſtly, it will follow, that he had prayed before; and conſequently, that this Temper in which He now was, was not* neceſſary *to* Prayer.

My

My Lord, one would think this Elaborate Proof was againſt ſomething aſſerted. Here you have indeed a thorough Conqueſt; but it is over *no body*. For did any one ever aſſert, that ſuch *Extraordinary Earneſtneſs* was *neceſſary* to Prayer? Does Dr. *Snape*, or any Divines, allow of no Prayers, except we ſweat *Drops of Blood?* Will your Lordſhip ſay, that the *Neceſſity* of this Temper is imply'd in the Quotation of this Text, as a Direction for Prayer? I anſwer, juſt as much as we are all obliged to die upon the *Croſs*, becauſe his *Sufferings* there are propoſed to us as an *Example*.

The plain Truth of the Matter, my Lord, I take to be this: Our *Saviour's Sufferings* on the Croſs were ſuch as no Mortal can undergo; yet they are juſtly propoſed as an *Example* to us to bear with Patience ſuch Sufferings as are within the Compaſs of human Nature. His earneſt Devotion before this Paſſion, far *exceeded* any *Fervours* which the Devouteſt of Mankind can attain to: Yet it is juſtly propoſed to us as an *Example*, to excite us to be as fervent as we can; and may be juſtly alledg'd in our Defence, when our *warm* and *paſſionate* Addreſſes to God in our Calamities, are condemned as *ſuperſtitious Folly*. My Lord, muſt nothing be an *Example*, but what we can exactly come up to?

How then can the *Life* of our *Saviour*, which was entirely free from *Sin*, be an Example to us? How could it be ſaid in the Scripture, *Be ye holy, for I am holy?* Can any one be *Holy* as *God is?*

My Lord, one might properly urge the *Practice* of the Primitive Chriſtians, who parted with *all* they had for the Support of their *Indigent Brethren*, as an Argument for Charity, without deſigning to oblige People to part with all they have. And *he* that ſhould, in anſwer to ſuch an Argument, tell the World, that *Charity* is only a *calm, undiſturb'd Good Will to all Mankind*, would juſt as much ſet forth the *true Doctrine of Charity*, as He that defines Prayer to be a *calm and undiſturb'd Addreſs to Heaven*, for no other Reaſon, but becauſe no *certain* Degrees of Fervour or Affection are neceſſarily required to conſtitute Devotion. My Lord, has *Charity* nothing to do with the *Diſtribution of Alms*, becauſe no certain Allowance is fixed? Why then muſt *Prayer* have nothing to do with *Heat* and *Fervency*, becauſe no fixed Degrees of it are neceſſary?

Therefore, my Lord, as I would define *Charity* to be a pious Diſtribution of ſo much of our Goods to the Poor, as is ſuitable to our Circumſtances; ſo I would define *Prayer*, an *Addreſs* to *Heaven*, *enliven'd with ſuch Degrees*

grees of Fervour *and* Intenſeneſs, *as our* Natural Temper, *influenc'd* with a true Senſe *of God, could beget in us.*

Your Lordſhip ſays, you only deſire to ſtrike at the Root of *ſuperſtitious Folly*, and *eſtabliſh* Prayer *in its room*; and this is to be effected by making our Addreſſes *calm and undiſturb'd:* By which we are to underſtand, a *Freedom* from *Heat and Paſſion*, as your Lordſhip explains it, by an Application to yourſelf.

If therefore any one ſhould happen to be ſo *diſturb'd* at his Sins, as to offer a *broken* and *contrite Heart* to God, inſtead of one *calm* and *undiſturb'd*; or, like holy *David*, his Soul ſhould be athirſt for God, or pant after him, as the *Hart panteth after the Water-brooks*, this would not be *Prayer*, but *ſuperſtitious Folly.*

My Lord, *Calmneſs* of *Temper*, as it ſignifies a Power over our *Paſſions*, is a *happy Circumſtance* of a *Rational Nature*, but no farther: When the Object is well choſen, there is no Danger in the Purſuit.

The Calmneſs your Lordſhip hath deſcribed, is fit for a *Philoſopher* in his *Study*, who is ſolving *Mathematical* Problems. But if he ſhould come abroad into the World, thus entirely

tirely empty of all Paſſion, he would live to as much Purpoſe, as if he had left his Underſtanding behind him.

What a fine Subject, my Lord, would ſuch a one make, who, when he heard of *Plots*, *Invaſions*, and *Rebellions*, would continue as *calm* and *undiſturb'd*, as when he was *comparing Lines and Figures?* Such a calm Subject would ſcarce be taken for any *Great Loyaliſt*.

Your Lordſhip, in other Places, hath recommended an *open* and *undiſguiſed Zeal* *, and told us ſuch things as ought to *alarm the coldeſt Heart* †. Sure, my Lord, this is ſomewhat more than *Calm* and *Undiſturb'd*: And will your Lordſhip, who hath expreſſed ſo much Concern for this *Ornament and Defence of human Underſtanding*, perſuade us to part with the leaſt Degree of it upon any Account? I am, my Lord, (with all Reſpect that is due to your Lordſhip's Station and Character)

Your moſt Humble and

Obedient Servant,

WILLIAM LAW.

* Sermon 5th *Nov.* p. 5.

† Sermon, p. 14.

A SECOND

LETTER

TO THE

Bishop of *BANGOR*;

WHEREIN

His Lordship's NOTIONS

OF

Benediction, *Absolution*, and *Church-Communion*,

Are proved to be Destructive of every Institution of the *Christian Religion*.

To which is added, A

POSTSCRIPT,

In Answer to the OBJECTIONS that have been made against his former Letter.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M.A.

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A SECOND

LETTER

TO THE

Bishop of EXETER:

OCCASIONED BY

His Lordship's REMARKS

ON

His Second Letter to the Clergy

of the Diocese concerning

The Revival of the Solemn Invocation of the Holy Ghost in the Ordination of Priests.

My LORD,

A Juſt Concern for Truth, and the Firſt Principles of the Chriſtian Religion, was the only Motive that engaged me in the Examination of your Lordſhip's Doctrines, in a former Letter to your Lordſhip. And the ſame Motive, I hope, will be thought a ſufficient Apology for my preſuming to give your Lordſhip the Trouble of a Second Letter.

Amongſt the Vain Contemptible Things, whereof your Lordſhip would create an Abhorrence in the Laity, are, the *Trifles* and *Niceties of Authoritative Benedictions, Abſolutions, Excommunications* *. Again, you ſay, that *to expect the Grace of God from any Hands, but his own, is to affront him*——†. And *that all depends upon God and ourſelves*; *That Human Benedictions, Human Abſolutions, Human Excommunications, have nothing to do with the Favour of God* ‖.

It is evident from theſe Maxims (for your Lordſhip aſſerts them as ſuch) that whatever Inſtitutions are obſerved in any Chriſtian Society, upon this Suppoſition, that thereby Grace is conferred through *Human Hands*, or by the Miniſtry of the Clergy, ſuch Inſtitutions ought to be condemned, and are condemned by your Lordſhip, as *trifling, uſeleſs, and affronting to God.*

There is an *Inſtitution*, my Lord, in the *yet* Eſtabliſhed Church of *England*, which we call *Confirmation:* It is founded upon the expreſs Words of Scripture, Primitive Obſervance, and the Univerſal Practice of all ſucceeding Ages in the Church. The Deſign of this Inſtitution is, that it ſhould be a Means

* *Preſervative*, p. 98. † P. 89. ‖ P. 101.

of conferring Grace, by the Prayer and Impoſition of the *Biſhop's Hands* on thoſe who have been already Baptized. But yet againſt all this Authority, both Divine and Human, and the expreſs Order of our own Church, your Lordſhip teaches the Laity, *that all Human Benedictions are uſeleſs Niceties*; and *that to expect God's Grace from any Hands but his own, is to affront him.*

If ſo, my Lord, what ſhall we ſay in Defence of the Apoſtles? We read (*Acts* 8. 14.) that when *Philip* the Deacon had baptized the *Samaritans*, the Apoſtles ſent *Peter* and *John* to them, who having prayed, and *laid their Hands on them, they received the Holy Ghoſt, who before was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jeſus.*

My Lord, ſeveral things are here out of Queſtion; *Firſt*, That ſomething elſe, even in the Apoſtolical Times, was neceſſary, beſides Baptiſm, in order to qualify Perſons to become compleat Members of the Body, or Partakers of the Grace of Chriſt. They had been baptized, yet did not receive the Holy Ghoſt, till the Apoſtles Hands were laid upon them. *2dly*, That God's Graces are not only conferred by means of *Human Hands*, but of ſome particular Hands, and not others. *3dly*, That this Office was ſo ſtrictly appropriated to the Apoſtles, or Chief Governors of the Church, that it could not be performed by inſpired Men, though empowered to work Miracles, who were of an inferior Order; as *Philip* the Deacon. *4thly*, That the Power of the Apoſtles for the Performance of this Ordinance, was entirely owing to their ſuperior Degree in the Miniſtry, and not to any extraordinary Gifts they were endowed with: For then *Philip* might have performed it; who was not wanting in thoſe Gifts, being himſelf an Evangeliſt, and Worker of Miracles: Which is a Demonſtration, that his Incapacity aroſe from his inferior Degree in the Miniſtry.

And

And now, my Lord, are all *human Benedictions Niceties and Trifles?* Are the Means of God's Grace in his *own Hands alone?* Is it wicked, and *affronting to God*, to suppose the contrary? How then comes *Peter* and *John* to confer the Holy Ghost by the Imposition of their Hands? How comes it, that they appropriate this Office to themselves? Is the Dispensation of God's Grace in his *own Hands alone?* And yet can it be dispensed to us by the Ministry of some Persons, and not by that of others?

Were the Apostles so wicked as to distinguish themselves by a Pretence to vain Powers, which God had reserved to himself; And which your Lordship supposes, from the Title of your *Preservative*, that it is inconsistent with *common Sense*, to imagine that God could or would have communicated to Men?

Had any of your Lordship's well-instructed Laity lived in the Apostles Days, with what Indignation must they have rejected this senseless chimerical *Claim* of the Apostles? They must have said, Why do you, *Peter* or *John*, pretend to this *Blasphemous Power? Whilst we believe the Gospel, we cannot expect the Grace of God from any Hands but his own.* You give us the *Holy Ghost!* You confer the Grace of God! Is it not impious to think, that *he should make our Improvement* in Grace depend upon your Ministry; or hang our Salvation on any *particular* Order of Clergymen? We know, that God is Just, and Good, and True, *and that all* depends upon Him and ourselves, and that *human Benedictions* are *Trifles.* Therefore whether you *Peter*, or you *Philip*, or both, or neither of you lay *your* Hands upon us, we are neither better nor worse; but just in the *same State of Grace* as we were before.

This Representation has not one Syllable in it, but what is founded in your Lordship's Doctrine, and perfectly agreeable to it.

The late moſt Pious and Learned Biſhop *Beveridge* has theſe remarkable Words upon *Confirmation:* " How any Biſhops in our Age dare neglect ſo con- " ſiderable a Part of their Office, I know not; but " fear they will have no good Account to give of it, " *when they come to ſtand before God's Tribunal* *."

But we may juſtly, and therefore I hope, with Decency, aſk your Lordſhip, how you dare perform this Part of your Office? For you have condemned it as *Trifling* and *Wicked*; as *Trifling*, becauſe it is an *human Benediction*; as *Wicked*, becauſe it ſuppoſes Grace conferred by the *Hands of the Biſhop*. If therefore any baptized Perſons ſhould come to your Lordſhip for Confirmation, if you are *ſincere* in what you have delivered, your Lordſhip ought, I humbly conceive, to make them this Declaration:

" My Friends, for the ſake of *Decency* and *Order*, " I have taken upon me the Epiſcopal Character; " and, according to Cuſtom, which has long pre- " vailed againſt common Senſe, am now to lay my " Hands upon you: But I beſeech you, as you " have any Regard to the Truth of the Goſpel, or " to the Honour of God, not to imagine there is " any thing in this Action, more than an uſeleſs " empty Ceremony: For if you expect to have " any Spiritual Advantage from *human Benedictions*, " or to receive Grace from the Impoſition of a " Biſhop's Hands, you affront God, and in effect, " renounce Chriſtianity."

Pray, my Lord, conſider that Paſſage in the Scripture, where the Apoſtle ſpeaks of *Leaving the Principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt, and going on unto Perfection; not laying again the Foundation of Repentance from dead Works, of Faith towards God, of the Doctrine of Baptiſms, and of Laying on of Hands, and of the Reſurrection of the Dead, and of eternal Judgment*, (Heb. vi. 1, 2.)

My

* *Firſt Volume of Sermons.*

My Lord, here it is undeniably plain, that this Laying on of Hands (which is with us called *Confirmation*) is ſo fundamental a Part of Chriſt's Religion, that it is called one of the firſt Principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt; and is placed amongſt ſuch primary Truths, as the Reſurrection of the Dead, and of Eternal Judgment.

St. *Cyprian* ſpeaking of this Apoſtolical Impoſition of Hands, ſays, *The ſame is now practiſed with us; they who have been baptiſed in the Church, are brought to the Preſidents of the Church, that by our Prayer and Impoſition of Hands, they may receive the Holy Ghoſt, and be conſummated with the Lord's Seal.*

And muſt we yet believe, that all *human Benedictions* are Dreams, and the Impoſition of human Hands trifling and uſeleſs; and that to expect God's Graces from them, is to affront him; though the Scriptures expreſsly teach us, that God confers his Grace by means of certain *particular human Hands*, and not of others; though they tell us, this *human Benediction*, this Laying on of Hands, is one of the firſt Principles of the Religion of Chriſt, and as much a Foundation-Doctrine, as the Reſurrection of the Dead, and Eternal Judgment; and though every Age ſince that of the Apoſtles, has ſtrictly obſerved it as ſuch, and the Authority of our own Church ſtill requires the Obſervance of it?

I come now, my Lord, to another ſacred and Divine Inſtitution of Chriſt's Church, which ſtands expoſed and condemned by your Lordſhip's Doctrine; and that is, the *Ordination* of the Chriſtian Clergy; where, by means of an human Benediction, and the Impoſition of the Biſhop's Hands, the Holy Ghoſt is ſuppoſed to be conferred on Perſons towards conſecrating them for the Work of the Miniſtry.

We find it conſtantly taught by the Scriptures, that all Eccleſiaſtical Authority, and the Graces whereby the Clergy are qualified and enabled to ex-

erciſe their Functions to the Benefit of the Church, are the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit. Thus the Apoſtle exhorts the Elders *to take heed unto the Flock, over which the Holy Ghoſt had made them Overſeers*, (Eph. iv. 7.) But how, my Lord, had the Holy Ghoſt made them Overſeers, but by the laying on of the Apoſtles Hands? They were not immediately called by the Holy Ghoſt; but being conſecrated by *ſuch human Hands* as had been authorized to that Purpoſe, they were as truly called by him, and ſanctified with Grace for that Employment, as if they had received an immediate or miraculous Commiſſion.. So again, St. *Paul* puts *Timothy* in mind *to ſtir up the Gift of God that was in him, by laying on of his Hands*, (2 Tim. ii. 6.)

And now, my Lord, if *human Benedictions* be ſuch idle *Dreams* and *Trifles*; if it be *affronting to God*, to expect his Graces from them, or through *human Hands*; do we not plainly want new Scriptures? Muſt we not give up the Apoſtles as furious High-Church Prelates, who aſpired to preſumptuous Claims, and talked of conferring the Graces of God by their own Hands? Was not this Doctrine as ſtrange and unaccountable then, as at preſent? Was it not as inconſiſtent with the Attributes and Sovereignty of God at that Time, to have his Graces paſs through other Hands than his own, as in any ſucceeding Age? Nay, my Lord, where ſhall we find any Fathers or Councils, in the primitive Church, but who owned and aſſerted theſe Powers? They that were ſo ready to part with their Lives, rather than do the leaſt Diſhonour to God, or the Chriſtian Name, yet were all guilty of *this horrid Blaſphemy*, in imagining that they were to bleſs in God's Name; and that by the Benediction and laying on of the Biſhop's Hands, the Graces of the Holy Ghoſt could be conferred on any Perſons.

Agreeable

Agreeable to the Senſe of Scripture and Antiquity, our Church uſes this Form of Ordination: *The Biſhop laying his Hands on the Perſon's Head, ſaith, Receive the Holy Ghoſt, for the Office and Work of a Prieſt in the Church of God, committed unto thee, by the Impoſition of our Hands.* From this Form, it is plain, *Firſt*, That our Church holds, that the Reception of the Holy Ghoſt is neceſſary to conſtitute a Perſon a Chriſtian Prieſt. *Secondly*, That the Holy Ghoſt is conferred through *human Hands*. *Thirdly*, That it is by the Hands of a Biſhop that the Holy Ghoſt is conferred.

If, therefore, your Lordſhip is right in your Doctrine, the Church of *England* is evidently moſt corrupt: For if it be diſhonourable and affronting to God, to expect his Grace from any human Hands, it muſt of Neceſſity be diſhonourable and affronting to him, for a Biſhop to pretend to confer it by his Hands. And can that Church be any ways defended, that has eſtabliſhed ſuch an Iniquity by Law, and made the Form of it ſo neceſſary? How can your Lordſhip anſwer it to your Laity, for taking the Character or Power of a Biſhop from ſuch a Form of Words? You tell them it is affronting to God, to expect his Grace from *human Hands*; yet, to qualify your ſelf for a Biſhoprick, you let human Hands be laid on you, after a Manner which directly ſuppoſes you thereby receive the Holy Ghoſt! Is it wicked in them to expect it from *human Hands?* And is it leſs ſo in your Lordſhip, to pretend to receive it from human Hands? He that believes it is affronting to God, to expect his Grace from human Hands, muſt likewiſe believe, that our Form of Ordination, which promiſes the Holy Ghoſt by the *Biſhop's Hands*, muſt be alſo affronting to God. Certainly he cannot be ſaid to be very jealous of the Honour of God, who will ſubmit himſelf to be made a Biſhop by a Form of Words derogatory, upon his own Principles, to God's Honour.

Suppoſe your Lordſhip was to have been conſecrated to the Office of a Biſhop by theſe Words; *Take thou Power to ſuſtain all Things in Being, given thee by my Hands.* I ſuppoſe your Lordſhip would think it entirely unlawful to ſubmit to the Form of ſuch an Ordination. But, my Lord, *Receive thou the Holy Ghoſt*, &c. is as impious a Form, according to your Lordſhip's Doctrine, and equally injurious to the eternal Power and Godhead, as the other. For if the Grace of God can only be had from *his own* Hands, would it not be as innocent in the Biſhop to ſay, *Receive thou Power to ſuſtain all Things in Being*, as to ſay, *Receive the Holy Ghoſt, by the Impoſition of my Hands?* And would not a Compliance with either Form be equally unlawful? According to your Doctrine, in each of them God's Prerogative is equally invaded, and therefore the Guilt muſt be the ſame.

It may alſo well be wondered, how your Lordſhip can accept of a Character, which is, or ought to be, chiefly diſtinguiſhed by the Exerciſe of that Power which you diſclaim, as in the Offices of *Confirmation* and *Ordination.* For, my Lord, where can be the Sincerity of ſaying, *Receive the Holy Ghoſt by the Impoſition of our Hands*, when you declare it affronting to God, to expect it from any Hands but his own? Suppoſe your Lordſhip had been preaching to the Laity againſt owning any Authority in the Virgin *Mary*, and yet ſhould acquieſce in the Conditions of being made a Biſhop in her Name, and by recognizing her Power; could ſuch a Submiſſion be conſiſtent with Sincerity? Here you forbid the Laity to expect God's Grace from any Hands but his; yet not only accept of an Office, upon Suppoſition of the contrary Doctrine; but oblige your ſelf according to the Senſe of the Church wherein you are ordained a Biſhop, to act frequently in direct Oppoſition to your own Principles.

So

So that, I think, it is undeniably plain, that you have at once, my Lord, by these Doctrines condemned the Scriptures, the Apostles, their martyred Successors, the Church of *England*, and your own Conduct; and have thereby given us some Reason (though I wish there were no Occasion to mention it) to suspect, whether you, who allow of no other Church, but what is founded in Sincerity, are your self really a Member of any Church.

I shall now proceed to say something upon the Consecration of the Lord's Supper, which is as much exposed as a *Trifle*, by your Lordship's Doctrine, as the other Institutions. St. *Paul* says, *The Cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ?* My Lord, is not this Cup still to be blessed? Must there not therefore be such a Thing as an *human Benediction?* And are human Benedictions to be all despised, though by them the Bread and Wine become Means of Grace, and are made the spiritual Nourishment of our Souls? Can any one bless this Cup? If not; then there is a Difference between human Benedictions: Some are authorized by God, and their Blessing is effectual; whilst others only are vain and presumptuous. If the Prayer over the Elements, and the Consecration, be only a Trifle and a Dream, and it be offensive to God to expect they are converted into Means of Grace by an human Benediction; why then did St. *Paul* pretend to bless them? Why did he make it the Privilege of the Church? Or, why do we keep up the same Solemnity? But if it be to be blessed only by God's Ministers, then how can your Lordship answer it to God, for ridiculing and abusing human Benedictions, and telling the World that a particular Order of the Clergy are not of any Necessity, nor can be of any Advantage to them? For if the Sacrament can only be blessed by God's Ministers, then such Ministers are as necessary as the Sacraments themselves.

St.

St. *Paul* says, the Cup must be blessed: If you say, any one may bless it, then, though you contemn the Benedictions of the Clergy, you allow of them by every body else: If every Body cannot bless it, then you must confess; that the Benedictions of some Persons are effectual, where others are not.

My Lord, the great Sin against the Holy Ghost, was the Denial of his Operation in the Ministry of our Saviour. And how near does your Lordship come to it, in denying the Operation of that same Spirit, in the Ministers whom Christ hath sent? They are employed in the same Work that he was. He left his Authority with them, and promised that the Holy Spirit should remain with them to the End of the World; that whatsoever they should bind on Earth, should be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever they should loose on Earth, should be loosed in Heaven; and that whosoever despises them, despises him, and him that sent him. And yet your Lordship tells us, we need not to trouble our Heads about any particular Sort of Clergy; that all is to be transacted betwixt God and ourselves; that human Benedictions are insignificant Trifles.

But pray what Proof has your Lordship for all this? Have you any Scripture for it? Has God any where declared that no Men on Earth have any Authority to bless in his Name? Has he any where said, that it is a wicked, presumptuous Thing, for any one to pretend to it? Has he any where told us that it is inconsistent with his Honour to bestow his Graces by *human Hands?* Has he any where told us that he has no Ministers, no Ambassadors on Earth; but that all his Gifts and Graces are to be received immediately from his own Hands? Have you any Antiquity, Fathers, or Councils, on your Side? No; the whole Tenor of Scripture, the whole Current of Tradition is against you: Your novel Doctrine has only this to recommend it to the Libertines of the

Age, who universally give into it, that it never was the Opinion of any Church, or Churchman. It is your Lordship's proper Assertion, *That we offend God in expecting his Graces from any Hands but his own.*

Now it is strange, that God should be offended with his own Methods, or that your Lordship should find us out a Way of pleasing him, more suitable to his Nature and Attributes, than what he has taught us in the Scriptures. I call them his own Methods; for what else is the whole *Jewish* Dispensation, but a Method of God's Providence, where his Blessings and Judgments were dispensed by *human Hands?* What is the Christian Religion but a Method of Salvation, where the chief Means of Grace are offered and dispensed by human Hands? Let me here recommend to your Lordship, the excellent Words of a very learned and judicious Prelate on this Occasion.

"This will have no Weight with any reasonable "Man, against the Censures of the Church, or "any other Ordinance of the Gospel, that they "make the Intervention of other Men necessary "to our Salvation; since it has always been God's "ordinary Method, to dispense his Blessings and "Judgments by the Hands of Men." *

Your Lordship exclaims against your Adversaries as such romantick strange sort of Men, for talking of Benedictions and Absolutions, and of the Necessity of receiving God's Ordinances from proper Hands: Yet, my Lord, here is an excellent Bishop, against whose *Learning*, *Judgment*, and *Protestantism*, there can be no Objection; who says, if a Person has but the *Use of his Reason*, he will have nothing to object to any Ordinances of the Gospel, which make the Intervention of other Men necessary towards the Conveyance of them, since that has always been God's ordinary Method. The Bishop does not say, it is necessary a Man should be a *great Divine*

* *Dr.* Potter's *Church Government*, p. 336.

Divine to acknowledge it; so he be but a *reasonable Man*, he will allow it. Yet your Lordship is so far from being this *reasonable Man*, that you think your Adversaries void both of Reason and common Sense, for teaching it. You expressly exclude *all* Persons from having any Thing to do with our Salvation, and say, it wholly depends upon God and our selves.

You tell us, that *authoritative Benediction is another of the Terms of Art used by your Protestant Adversaries; in which they claim a Right, in one regular Succession, of blessing the People* *. An ingenious Author, my Lord, (in the Opinion of many, if not of most of your Friends) calls the *Consecration* of the Elements *Conjuration* †: Your Lordship calls the *Sacerdotal Benediction* a *Term of Art*; too plain an Intimation, though in more remote and somewhat softer Terms, that in the Sense of a *certain Father* of the Church, her Clergy are little better than so many Jugglers.

Your Lordship says, *If they only meant hereby to declare upon what Terms God will give his Blessings* to Christians, *or to express their own hearty Wishes for them, this might be understood.* So it might, my Lord, very easily; and I suppose every Body understands that they may do this, whether they be Clergy or Laity, Men or Women: For I presume any one may declare what he takes to be the Terms of the Gospel, and wish that others may faithfully observe them. But I humbly presume, my Lord, that the good Bishop abovementioned meant something more than this, when he spake of *Ordinances which make the Intervention of other Men* necessary *to our Salvation, and of God's dispensing his Blessings* in virtue of them through their Hands.

There is a superstitious Custom (in your Lordship's Account it must be so) yet remaining in most Places, of sending for a Clergyman to minister to sick Persons in imminent Danger of Death: Even those

* Page 91. † *Rights of the Christian Church.*

thoſe who have abuſed the Clergy all their Lives long, are glad to beg their Aſſiſtance when they apprehend themſelves upon the Confines of another World. There is no Reaſon, my Lord, to diſlike this *Practice*, but as it ſuppoſes a Difference between the *Sacerdotal Prayers* and *Benedictions*, and thoſe of a Nurſe.

We read, my Lord, that God would not heal *Abimelech*, though he knew the Integrity of his Heart, till *Abraham* had prayed for him: *He is a Prophet*, ſaid God, *he ſhall pray for thee, and thou ſhalt live*, (Gen. xx. 7.)

Pray, my Lord, was not God juſt, and good, and true, in the Days of *Abraham*, as he is now? Yet you ſee, *Abimelech*'s *Integrity* was not available it ſelf. He was to be pardoned by the Prayer of *Abraham*, and his Prayer was effectual; and ſo repreſented, becauſe it was the Prayer of a *Prophet*.

Suppoſe, my Lord, that *Abimelech* had ſaid with your Lordſhip, *That it is affronting to God, that we ſhould expect his Graces from any Hands* but his own; *that all is to be tranſacted between God and our ſelves*; and ſo had rejected the Prayer of *Abraham*, as a mere Eſſay of *Prophet-Craft*; he had then acted with as much Prudence and Piety as your Lordſhip's Laity would do, if you could perſuade them to deſpiſe *Benedictions* and *Abſolutions*, to regard no *particular ſort of Clergy*; but entirely depend upon God and themſelves, without any other Aſſiſtance whatever.

We read alſo, *that* Joſhua *was full of the Spirit of Wiſdom, for* Moſes *had laid his Hands upon him*, (Deut. xxxiv. 9.) Was it not as abſurd, my Lord, in the Days of *Joſhua*, for *human Hands* to *bleſs*, as it is now? Did there not then lie the ſame Objection againſt *Moſes*, that there does now againſt the Chriſtian Clergy? Had *Moſes* any more *natural Power* to give the Spirit of Wiſdom, *&c.* by his Hands, than the Clergy have to confer Grace by theirs?

They

They are both equally weak and insufficient for these Purposes of themselves, and equally powerful when it pleases God to make them so.

Again, when *Eliphaz* and his Friends had displeased God, they were not to be reconciled to God by their own Repentance, or transact that Matter only between God and themselves; but they were referred to apply to *Job*. *My Servant* Job *shall pray for you, for him will I accept*, (Job. xlii. 8.) Might not *Eliphaz* here have said, shall I so far affront God, as to think I cannot be blessed without the Prayers of *Job?* Shall I be so weak or senseless, as to imagine, my own Supplications and Repentance will not save me; or that I need apply to any one but God alone, to qualify me for the Reception of his Grace?

Again, *The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, speak unto Aaron and his sons, saying, on this wise shall ye bless the children of Israel, saying unto them*, The Lord bless and keep thee, *&c. and I will bless them*, (Numb. vi. 22.)

Again, *The Priests of the Sons of Levi shall come near; for them hath the Lord thy God chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in the Name of the Lord*, (Deut. xxi. 5.)

Now, my Lord, this is what we mean by the authoritative Administrations of the Christian Clergy; whether they be by way of Benediction, or of any other kind. We take them to be Persons whom God has chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in his Name. We imagine that our Saviour was a greater *Priest and Mediator* than *Aaron*, or any of God's former Ministers. We are assured that Christ sent his Apostles, as his Father had sent him, and that therefore they were his true Successors: And since they did commission others to succeed them in their Office, by the Imposition of Hands, as *Moses* commissioned *Joshua* to succeed him; the Clergy who have succeeded the Apostles, have as divine a

Call

Call and Commiſſion to their Work, as thoſe who were called by our Saviour; and are as truly his Succeſſors, as the Apoſtles themſelves were.

From the Places of Scripture above-mentioned, it is evident, and indeed from the whole Tenor of Sacred Writ, that it may conſiſt with the Goodneſs and Juſtneſs of God to depute Men to act in his Name, and be miniſterial towards the Salvation of others; and to lay a Neceſſity upon his Creatures of qualifying themſelves for his Favour, and receiving his Graces by the Hands and Intervention of mere Men.

But, my Lord, if there be now any Set of Men upon Earth that are more peculiarly God's Miniſters than others, and through whoſe Adminiſtrations, Prayers, and Benedictions, God will accept of returning Sinners, and receive them to Grace; you have done all you can to prejudice People againſt them: You have taught the Laity that all is to be tranſacted between God and themſelves, and that they need not value any particular Sort of Clergy in the World.

I leave it to the Great Judge and Searcher of Hearts, to judge from what Principles, or upon what Motives your Lordſhip has been induced to teach theſe Things; but muſt declare, that, for my own Part, if I had the greateſt Hatred to Chriſtianity, I ſhould think it could not be more expreſſed than by teaching what your Lordſhip has publickly taught. If I could rejoice in the Miſery and Ruin of Sinners, I ſhould think it ſufficient Matter of Triumph, to drive them from the Miniſters of God, and to put them upon inventing new Schemes of ſaving themſelves, inſtead of ſubmitting to the ordinary Methods of Salvation appointed by God.

It will not follow from any thing I have ſaid, that the Laity have loſt their Chriſtian Liberty, or that no Body can be ſaved but whom the Clergy

pleaſe to ſave; that they have the arbitrary Diſpoſal of Happineſs to Mankind. Was *Abimelech*'s Happineſs in the Diſpoſition of *Abraham*, becauſe he was to be received by Means of *Abraham*'s Interceſſion? Or could *Job* damn *Eliphaz*, becauſe he was to mediate for him, and procure his Reconciliation to God?

Neither, my Lord, do the *Chriſtian Clergy* pretend to this deſpotick Empire over their Flocks: They do not aſſume to themſelves a Power to damn the Innocent, or to ſave the Guilty; but they aſſert a ſober and juſt Right to reconcile Men to God, and to act in his Name, in reſtoring them to his Favour. They received their Commiſſion from thoſe whom Chriſt ſent with full Authority to ſend others, and with a Promiſe that he would be with them to the End of the World. From this they conclude, that they have his Authority, and that in conſequence of it, their Adminiſtrations are neceſſary, and effectual to the Salvation of Mankind; and that none can deſpiſe them, but who deſpiſe him that ſent them; and are as ſurely out of the Covenant of Grace, when they leave ſuch his Paſtors, as when they openly deſpiſe, or omit to receive his Sacraments.

And what is there in this Doctrine, my Lord, to terrify the *Conſciences* of the *Laity?* What is there here to bring the profane Scandal of *Prieſtcraft* upon the *Clergy?* Could it be any Ground of *Abimelech*'s hating *Abraham*, becauſe that *Abraham* was to reconcile him to God? Could *Eliphaz* juſtly have any Prejudice againſt *Job*, becauſe God would hear *Job*'s Interceſſion for him? Why then, my Lord, muſt the Chriſtian Prieſthood be ſo horrid and hateful an Inſtitution, becauſe the Deſign of it is to reſtore Men to the Grace and Favour of God? Why muſt we be abuſed and inſulted for being ſent upon the Errand of Salvation, and made Miniſters of eternal Happineſs to our Brethren? There is a Woe due to

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us if we preach not the Gospel, or neglect those ministerial Offices that Christ hath entrusted to us. We are to watch for their Souls, as those who are to give an Account. Why then must we be treated as arrogant Priests, or *popishly* affected, for pretending to have any Thing to do in the Discharge of our *Ministry* with the Salvation of Men? Why must we be reproached with *blasphemous Claims*, and *absurd senseless Powers*, for assuming to bless in God's Name, or thinking our Administrations more effectual than the Office of a common *Layman?*

But farther, To what Purpose does your Lordship except against these Powers in the *Clergy*, from their *common Frailties* and *Infirmities* with the rest of Mankind? Were not *Abraham* and *Job*, and the *Jewish* Priests, Men of like Passions with us? Did not our Saviour command the *Jews* to apply to their Priests, notwithstanding their personal Faults, because they sat in *Moses*'s Chair? Did not the Apostles assure their Followers that they were Men of like Passions with them? But did they therefore disclaim their Mission, or Apostolical Authority? Did they teach, that their natural Infirmities made them less the Ministers of God, or less necessary to the Salvation of Men? Their personal Defects did not make them depart from the Claim of those Powers they were invested with, or desert their Ministry, but, indeed, gave St. *Paul* Occasion to say, *We have this Treasure in earthen Vessels*, (*i. e.* this Authority committed to mere Men) *that the excellency of it may be of God, and not of Men*, The Apostle happens to differ very much from your Lordship: He says, such weak Instruments were made use of that the Glory might redound to God. Your Lordship says, to suppose Instruments to be of any Benefit to us, is to lessen the Sovereignty of God, and, in Consequence, his Glory.

Your Lordſhip imagines you have ſufficiently deſtroyed the *ſacerdotal Powers*, by ſhewing, that the Clergy are only Men, and ſubject to the common Frailties of Mankind. My Lord, we own the Charge, and do not claim any *ſacerdotal Powers* from our perſonal Abilities, or to acquire any Glory to our ſelves. But, weak as we are, we are God's Miniſters, and if we are either afraid or aſhamed of our Duty, we muſt periſh in the Guilt. But is a Prophet therefore proud, becauſe he inſiſts upon the Authority of his Miſſion? Cannot a Mortal be God's Meſſenger, and employed in his Affairs, but he muſt be inſolent and aſſuming, for having the Reſolution to own it? If we are to be reproved for pretending to be God's Miniſters, becauſe we are but Men, the Reproach will fall upon Providence; ſince it has pleaſed God, chiefly to tranſact his Affairs with Mankind by the Miniſtry of their Brethren.

Your Lordſhip has not one Word from Scripture againſt theſe ſacerdotal Powers; no Proof that Chriſt has not ſent Men to be effectual Adminiſtrators of his Graces: You only aſſert, that there can be no ſuch Miniſters, becauſe they are mere Men.

Now, my Lord, I muſt beg Leave to ſay, that if the natural Weakneſs of Men makes them incapable of being the Inſtruments of conveying Grace to their Brethren; if the Clergy cannot be of any Uſe or Neceſſity to their Flocks, for this Reaſon; then it undeniably follows, that there can be no *poſitive Inſtitutions* in the Chriſtian Religion that can procure any ſpiritual Advantages to the Members of it; then the Sacraments can be no longer any Means of Grace. For, I hope, no one thinks that Bread and Wine have any natural Force or Efficacy to convey Grace to the Soul. The Water in Baptiſm has the common Qualities of Water, and is deſtitute of any intrinſick Power to cleanſe the Soul, or purify from Sin. But your Lordſhip will not ſay, becauſe

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it has only the common Nature of Water, that therefore it cannot be a Means of Grace. Why then may not the Clergy, though they have the common Nature of Men, be conſtituted by God, to convey his Graces, and to be miniſterial to the Salvation of their Brethren? Can God conſecrate inanimate Things to ſpiritual Purpoſes, and make them the Means of eternal Happineſs? And is Man the only Creature that he cannot make ſubſervient to his Deſigns? The only *Being*, who is too weak for an Omnipotent God to render effectual towards attaining the Ends of his Grace?

Is it juſt and reaſonable, to reject and deſpiſe the *Miniſtry* and *Benedictions* of Men, becauſe they are Men like ourſelves? And is it not as reaſonable, to deſpiſe the Sprinkling of Water, a Creature below us, a ſenſeleſs and inanimate Creature?

Your Lordſhip therefore, muſt either find us ſome other Reaſon for rejecting the Neceſſity of *human Adminiſtrations*, than becauſe they are *human*; or elſe give up the Sacraments, and *all* poſitive Inſtitutions along with them.

Surely, your Lordſhip muſt have a mighty Opinion of *Naaman* the *Syrian*, who, when the Prophet bid him go waſh in *Jordan* ſeven times, to the end he might be clean from his Leproſy, very *wiſely* remonſtrated, *Are not* Abana *and* Pharpar, *Rivers of* Damaſcus, *better than all the Waters of* Iſrael?

This, my Lord, diſcovered *Naaman*'s great Liberty of Mind; and it is much, this has not been produced before, as an Argument of his being a *Free-Thinker*. He took the Water of *Jordan* to be *only Water*; as your Lordſhip juſtly obſerves a Clergyman to be *only* a Man: And if you had been with him, you could have informed him, that the waſhing *ſeven Times* was a mere *Nicety* and *Trifle* of the Prophet; and that ſince it is God alone who can work *miraculous Cures*, we ought not to think, that

they depend upon any external Means, or any ſtated Number of repeating them.

This, my Lord, is the true Scope and Spirit of your Argument: If the *Syrian* was right in deſpiſing the Water of *Jordan*, becauſe it was only *Water*; your Lordſhip might be right in deſpiſing any particular Order of Clergy, becauſe they are but Men. Your Lordſhip is certainly as right, or as wrong, as he was.

And now, my Lord, let the common Senſe of Mankind here judge, whether, if the Clergy are to be eſteemed as having no Authority, becauſe they are but Men; it does not plainly follow, that every thing elſe, every Inſtitution that has not ſome *natural* Force and Power to produce the Effects deſigned by it, is not alſo to be rejected as equally trifling and ineffectual.

The Sum of the Matter is this: It appears from many expreſs Facts, and indeed, from the whole Series of God's Providence, that it is not only conſiſtent with his Attributes, but alſo agreeable to his ordinary Methods of dealing with Mankind, that he ſhould ſubſtitute Men to act in his Name, and be *authoritatively* employed in conferring his Graces and Favours upon Mankind. It appears, that your Lordſhip's Argument againſt the authoritative Adminiſtrations of the Chriſtian Clergy, does not only contradict thoſe Facts, and condemn the ordinary Method of God's Diſpenſations; but likewiſe proves the Sacraments, and every poſitive Inſtitution of Chriſtianity, to be ineffectual, and as mere *Dreams* and *Trifles*, as the ſeveral *Offices and Orders* of the Clergy.

This, I hope, will be eſteemed a ſufficient Confutation of your Lordſhip's Doctrine, by all who have any true Regard or Zeal for the Chriſtian Religion; and only expect to be ſaved by the Methods of divine Grace propoſed in the Goſpel.

I ſhall

I shall now in a word or two set forth the Sacredness of the Ecclesiastical Character, as it is founded in the New Testament; with a particular regard to the Power of conferring Grace, and the Efficacy of human Benedictions.

It appears therein that all sacerdotal Power is derived from the Holy Ghost. Our Saviour himself took not that Ministry upon him, till he had this Consecration: And during the time of his Ministry, he was under the Guidance and Direction of the Holy Ghost. Through the Holy Spirit he gave Commandment to the Apostles whom he had chosen. When he ordained them to the Work of the Ministry, it was with these Words, *Receive the Holy Ghost*. Those whom the Apostles ordained to the same Function, it was by the same Authority: They laid their Hands upon the Elders, exhorting them to take care of the Flock of Christ, over which the Holy Ghost had made them Overseers.

Hereby they plainly declared, that however this Office was to descend from Man to Man through *human Hands*, that it was the Holy Ghost which consecrated them to that Employment, and gave them Authority to execute it.

From this it is also manifest, that the Priesthood is a Grace of the Holy Ghost: That it is not a Function founded on the Natural or Civil Rights of Mankind, but is derived from the special Authority of the Holy Ghost; and is as truly a positive Institution as the Sacraments. So that they who have no Authority to alter the Old Sacraments, and substitute New ones, have no Power to alter the Old Order of the Clergy, or introduce any other Order of them.

For why can we not change the Sacraments? Is it not, because they are only Sacraments, and operate as they are instituted by the Holy Ghost? Because they are useless ineffectual Rites without this Autho-

rity? And does not the same Reason hold as well for the Order of the Clergy? Does not the same Scripture tell us, they are equally instituted by the Holy Ghost, and oblige only by vertue of his Authority? How absurd is it therefore, to pretend to abolish, or depart from the settled Order of the Clergy, to make new Orders, or think any God's Ministers, unless we had his Authority, and could make new Sacraments, or a new Religion?

My Lord, how comes it, That we cannot alter the Scriptures? Is it not, because they are Divinely inspired, and dictated by the Holy Ghost? And since it is express Scripture, That the *Priesthood* is instituted and authorized by the same Holy Spirit, Why is not the Holy Ghost as much to be regarded in one Institution, as in another? Why may we not as well make a Gospel, and say, it was writ by the Holy Ghost, as make a new Order of Clergy, and call them his? Or esteem them as having any relation to him?

From this it likewise appears, That there is an absolute Necessity of a strict Succession of authorized Ordainers from the Apostolical Times, in order to constitute a *Christian Priest*. For since a Commission from the Holy Ghost is necessary for the exercise of this Office; no one now can receive it, but from those who have derived their Authority in a true Succession, from the Apostles. We could not, my Lord, call our present Bibles *the Word of God*, unless we knew the Copies from which they are taken were taken from other true ones, till we come to the Originals themselves. No more could we call any true Ministers, or authorized by the Holy Ghost, who have not received their Commission by an uninterrupted Succession of lawful Ordainers.

What an excellent Divine would he be, who should tell the World, it was not necessary that the several Copies and Manuscripts through which the

Scriptures

Scriptures have been tranſmitted through different Ages and Languages, ſhould be all true ones, and none of them forged? That *this was a Thing ſubject to ſo great Uncertainty, that God could not hang our Salvation on ſuch Niceties?* Suppoſe, for Proof of this, he ſhould appeal to the Scriptures; and aſk, where any mention is made of aſcertaining the Truth of all the Copies? Would not this be a Way of Arguing very Theological? The Application is very eaſy.

Your Lordſhip has not one Word to prove the uninterrupted Succeſſion of the Clergy a *Trifle* or *Dream*; but that it is ſubject to ſo great Uncertainty, and is never mentioned in the Scriptures. As to the Uncertainty of it, it is equally as uncertain, as whether the Scriptures be *Genuine*. There is juſt the ſame ſufficient Hiſtorical Evidence for the Certainty of one as the other. As to its not being mentioned in the Scripture, the Doctrine upon which it is founded, plainly made it unneceſſary to mention it. Is it needful for the Scriptures to tell us, that if we take our Bible from any falſe Copy, that it is not the Word of God? Why then need they tell us, that if we are ordained by uſurping falſe Pretenders to Ordination, nor deriving their Authority to that end from the Apoſtles, that we are no Prieſts? Does not the thing itſelf ſpeak as plain in one Caſe as in the other? The Scriptures are only of uſe to us, as they are the Word of God: We cannot have this Word of God, which was written ſo many Years ago, unleſs we receive it from authentick Copies and Manuſcripts.

The Clergy have their Commiſſion from the Holy Ghoſt: The Power of conferring this Commiſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, was left with the Apoſtles: Therefore the preſent Clergy cannot have the ſame Commiſſion, or Call, but from an Order of Men, who have ſucceſſively conveyed this Power from the Apoſtles to the preſent time. So that, my Lord,

I ſhall beg leave to lay it down, as a plain, undeniable, Chriſtian Truth, that the Order of the Clergy is an Order of as neceſſary Obligation, as the Sacraments; and as unalterable as the Holy Scriptures; the ſame Holy Ghoſt being as truly the Author and Founder of the Prieſthood, as the Inſtitutor of the Sacraments, or the Inſpirer of thoſe Divine Oracles. And when your Lordſhip ſhall offer any freſh Arguments to prove that no particular ſort of Clergy is neceſſary; that the Benedictions and Adminiſtrations of the preſent Clergy of our moſt excellent Church, are trifling Niceties; if I cannot ſhew that the ſame Arguments will conclude againſt the Authority of the Sacraments and the Scriptures, I faithfully promiſe your Lordſhip to become a Convert to your Doctrine.

What your Lordſhip charges upon your Adverſaries, as an abſurd Doctrine, in pretending the Neceſſity of one regular, ſucceſſive, and particular Order of the Clergy, is a true Chriſtian Doctrine; and as certain from Scripture, as that we are to keep to the Inſtitution of particular Sacraments; or not to alter thoſe particular Scriptures, which now compoſe the Canon of the old and new Teſtament.

By authoritative Benediction, we do not mean any natural or intrinſick Authority of our own: But a Commiſſion from God, to be effectual Adminiſtrators of his Ordinances, and to bleſs in his Name. Thus, a Perſon who is ſent from God, to foretel things, of which he had before no Knowledge or Notion; or to denounce Judgments, which he has no natural Power to execute; may truly be ſaid to be an *authoritative Prophet*; becauſe he has the Authority of God for what he does. Thus, when the Biſhop is ſaid to confer Grace in Confirmation, this is properly an *authoritative Benediction*; becauſe he is then as truly doing what God has commiſſioned

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him to do, as when a Prophet declares upon what Errand he is ſent.

It is in this Senſe, my Lord, that the People are ſaid to be *authoritatively* bleſſed by the regular Clergy; becauſe they are *God's Clergy*, and act by his Commiſſion; becauſe by their Hands the People receive the Graces and Benefits of God's Ordinances; which they have no more Reaſon to expect from other Miniſters of their own Election, or if the Word may be uſed in an abuſive Senſe, of their own *Conſecration*, than to receive Grace from Sacraments of their own Appointment. The Scriptures teach us, That the Holy Ghoſt has inſtituted an Order of Clergy: We ſay, a Prieſthood, ſo authorized, can no more be changed by us, than we can change the Scriptures, or make new Sacraments; becauſe they are all founded on the ſame Authority, without any Power of a Diſpenſation delegated to us in one Caſe more than another. If therefore we have a Mind to continue in the Covenant of Chriſt, and receive the Grace and Benefit of his Ordinances, we muſt receive them through ſuch Hands as he has authorized for that Purpoſe, to the end we may be qualified to partake of the Bleſſings of them. For as a *true* Prieſt cannot benefit us by adminiſtring a *falſe* Sacrament; ſo a *true* Sacrament is nothing, when it is adminiſtered by a *falſe uncommiſſioned Miniſter*. Beſides this Benediction which attends the Ordinances of God, when they are thus performed by authorized Hands, there is a Benediction of Prayer, which we may juſtly think very effectual, when pronounced or diſpenſed by the ſame Hands.

Thus when the Biſhop or Prieſt intercedes for the Congregation, or pronounces the Apoſtolical Benediction upon them, we do not conſider this barely as an Act of Charity and Humanity, of one Chriſtian praying for another; but as the Work of a Perſon who is commiſſioned by God to *bleſs in his Name*,

Name, and be effectually miniſterial in the Conveyance of his Graces; or as the Prayer of one who is left with us in Chriſt's ſtead, to carry on his great Deſign of ſaving us; and whoſe Benedictions are ever ratified in Heaven, but when we render our ſelves in one Reſpect or other incapable of them.

Now, my Lord, they are theſe *ſacerdotal Prayers*, theſe authorized Sacraments, theſe commiſſioned Paſtors, whom the Holy Ghoſt has made Overſeers of the Flock of Chriſt, that your Lordſhip encourages the Laity to deſpiſe. You bid them *contemn the vain Words of Validity or Invalidity of God's Ordinances*; to *heed no particular ſort of Clergy, or the pretended Neceſſity of their Adminiſtrations.*

Your Lordſhip ſets up in this Controverſy for an Advocate for the Laity, againſt the *arrogant Pretences*, and *falſe Claims* of the Clergy. My Lord, we are no more contending for our ſelves in this Doctrine, than when we inſiſt upon any Article in the Creed. Neither is it any more our particular Cauſe, when we aſſert our Miſſion, than when we aſſert the Neceſſity of the Sacraments.

Who is to receive the Benefit of that Commiſſion which we aſſert, but they? Who is to ſuffer, if we pretend a falſe one, but ourſelves? Sad Injury, indeed, offered to the Laity! that we ſhould affect to be thought Miniſters of God for their Sakes! If we really are ſo, they are to receive the Benefit; if not, we are to bear the Puniſhment.

But your Lordſhip comes too late in this glorious Undertaking, to receive the Reputation of it; the Work has been already, in the Opinion of moſt People, better done to your Lordſhip's Hands. The famous Author of *The Rights of the Chriſtian Church*, has carried this *Chriſtian Liberty* to as great Heights as your Lordſhip. And though you have not one Notion, I can recollect, that has given Offence to the World, but what ſeems taken from that pernicious

nicious Book; yet your Lordſhip is not ſo juſt as ever once to cite or mention the Author; who, if your Lordſhip's Doctrine be true, deſerves to have a Statue erected to his Honour, and receive every Mark of Eſteem which is due to the greateſt Reformer of Religion.

Did not mine own Eyes aſſure me that he has caſt no Contempt upon the Church, no Reproach upon the Evangelical Inſtitutions, or the Sacred Function, but what has been ſeconded by your Lordſhip, I would never have placed your Lordſhip in the ſame View with ſo ſcandalous a Declaimer againſt the Ordinances of Chriſt. Whether I am right, or not, in this Charge, I freely leave to the Judgment of thoſe to determine, who are acquainted with both your Works. Yet this Author, my Lord, has been treated by the greateſt and beſt Part of the Nation, as a Free-thinking Infidel. But for what, my Lord? Not that he has declared againſt the Scriptures; not that he has rejected Revelation; (we are not, bleſſed be God, ſtill ſo far corrupted with the Principles of Infidelity) but becauſe he has reproached every particular Church, as ſuch, and denied all Obligation to Communion; becauſe he has expoſed Benedictions, Abſolutions, and Excommunications; denied the Divine Right of the Clergy, and ridiculed the pretended Sacredneſs and Neceſſity of their Adminiſtrations, as mere Niceties and Trifles, though commonly in more diſtant, I was going to ſay more decent Ways: In a Word, becauſe he made all Churches, all Prieſts, all Sacraments, however adminiſtred, equally valid, and denied any particular Method neceſſary to Salvation. Yet after all this profane Declamation, he allows, my Lord, that *Religious Offices may be appropriated to particular Men, called* Clergy, *for Order ſake only; and not on the Account of any peculiar Spiritual Advantages, Powers, or Privi-*

Privileges, which those who are set apart for them, have from Heaven. *

Agreeable to this, your Lordship owns, that you are not against the *Order*, or *Decency*, or *Subordination belonging to Christian Societies.* †

But, pray, my Lord, do you mean any more by this, than the abovementioned Author? Is it for any Thing, but the Sake of a little external *Order* or *Conveniency?* Is there any Christian Law that obliges to observe this kind of Order? Is there any real essential Difference between Persons ranked into this Order? Is it a Sin for any Body, especially the Civil Magistrate, to leave this Order, and make what other Orders he prefers to it? This your Lordship cannot resolve in the Affirmative; for then you must allow, that some Communions are safer than others, and that some Clergy have more Authority than others.

Will your Lordship say, that no *particular* Order can be necessary; yet some Order necessary, which may be different in different Communions? This cannot hold good upon your Lordship's Principles; for since Christ has left no Law about any Order, no Members of any particular Communion need submit to that Order; since it is confessed by your Lordship, That in Religion no Laws, but those of Christ, are of any Obligation. So that though you do not disclaim all external Order and Decency your self, yet you have taught other People to do it if they please, and as much as they please.

Suppose, my Lord, some Layman, upon a Pretence of your Lordship's Absence, or any other, should go into the Diocese of *Bangor*, and there pretend to ordain Clergymen; could your Lordship quote one Text of Scripture against him? Could you alledge any Law of Christ, or his Apostles, that he had broken? Could you prove him guilty of any Sin?

* Page 131. † *Answer to Dr.* Snape, p. 48.

Sin? No, my Lord, you would not do that; because this would be acknowledging such a Thing as a *Sinful Ordination*; and if there be Sinful Ordinations, then there must be some Law concerning Ordinations: For *Sin is the Transgression of the Law:* And if there be a Law concerning Ordinations, then we must keep to the Clergy *lawfully* ordained; and must confess, after all your Lordship has said, or can say, that still some Communions are safer than others.

If you should reprove such a one, as an *Englishman*, for acting in Opposition to the *English* Laws of *Decency* and *Order*; he would answer, That he has nothing to do with such *Trifles*; That Christ was sole Lawgiver in his Kingdom; That he was content to have his Kingdom as *orderly* and *decent* as Christ had left it; and since he had instituted no Laws in that Matter, it was presuming, for others to take upon them to add any Thing by way of *Order* or *Decency*, by Laws of their own: That as he had as much Authority from Christ to ordain Clergy, as your Lordship, he would not depart from his Christian Liberty.

If he should remonstrate to your Lordship in these, or Words to the like Effect, he would only reduce your Lordship's own Doctrine to Practice. This, my Lord, is part of that Confusion the learned Dr. *Snape* has charged you with being the Author of, in the Church of God: And all Persons, my Lord, whom you have taught not to regard any particular Sort of Clergy, must know (if they have the common Sense to which you appeal) that then no Clergy are at all necessary; and that it is as lawful for any Man to be his own Priest, as to sollicit his own Cause. For to say that no particular Sort of Clergy are necessary, and yet that in general the Clergy are necessary, is the same as to say, that Truth is necessary to be believed; yet the Belief of no particular Truth is necessary.

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The next Thing to be considered, my Lord, is your Doctrine concerning Absolutions. You begin thus: *The same you will find a sufficient Reply to their presumptuous Claim to an authoritative Absolution: An infallible Absolution cannot belong to fallible Men: But no Absolution can be authoritative, which is not infallible: Therefore no authoritative Absolution can belong to any Man living.* *

I must observe here, your Lordship does not reject this *Absolution*, because the Claim of it is not founded in Scripture; but by an Argument drawn from the Nature of the Thing: Because you imagine such Absolution requires Infallibility for the Execution of it; therefore it cannot belong to Men. Should this be true, it would prove, that if our Saviour had really so intended, he could not have given this Power to his Ministers. But, my Lord, who can see any Repugnancy in the Reason of the Thing it self? Is it not as easy to conceive, that our Lord should confer his Grace of Pardon by the Hands of his Ministers, as by Means of the Sacraments? And may not such Absolution be justly called *authoritative*, the Power of which is granted, and executed by his Authority?

Is it impossible for Men to have this Authority from God, because they may mistake in the Exercise of it? This Argument proves too much, and makes as short Work with every Institution of Christianity, as with the Power of Absolution.

For if it is impossible that Men should have Authority from God to absolve in his Name, because they are not infallible; this makes them equally incapable of being entrusted with any other Means of Grace; and consequently supposes the whole Priest's Office to imply a direct Impossibility in the very Notion of it.

* *Preservative*, p 92.

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Your Lordſhip's Argument is this: Chriſtians have their Sins pardoned upon certain Conditions; but fallible Men cannot certainly know theſe Conditions: Therefore fallible Men cannot have Authority to *abſolve*.

From hence I take Occaſion to argue thus: Perſons are to be admitted to the Sacraments on certain Conditions; but fallible Men cannot tell whether they come qualified to receive them according to theſe Conditions: Therefore fallible Men cannot have Authority to adminiſter the Sacraments.

2*dly*, This Argument ſubverts all Authority of the Chriſtian Religion itſelf, and the Reaſon of every inſtituted Means of Grace. For if nothing can be authoritative, but what a Man is infallibly aſſured of, then the Chriſtian Religion connot be an authoritative Method of Salvation; ſince a Man, by being a Chriſtian, does not become infallibly certain of his Salvation: Nor does Grace infallibly attend the Participation of the Sacraments. So that though your Lordſhip has formed this Argument only againſt this abſolving Power, yet it has as much Force againſt the Sacraments, and the Chriſtian Religion it ſelf. For if it be abſurd to ſuppoſe that the Prieſt ſhould abſolve any one, becauſe he cannot be certain that he deſerves Abſolution; does it not imply the ſame Abſurdity, to ſuppoſe that he ſhould have the Power of adminiſtring the Sacraments, when he cannot be *infallibly certain* that thoſe who receive them are duly qualified? If a Poſſibility of Error deſtroys the Power in one Caſe, it as certainly deſtroys it in the other. Again, if Abſolution cannot be authoritative, unleſs it be infallible; then it is plain that the Chriſtian Religion is not an authoritative Means of Salvation; becauſe all Chriſtians are not infallibly ſaved: Nor can the Sacraments be authoritative Means of Grace, becauſe all who partake of them do not infallibly obtain Grace.

Your

Your Lordſhip proceeds with your Laity by way of Expoſtulation: *If they amuſe you with that Power which Chriſt left with his Apoſtles, Whoſe ſoever Sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whoſe ſoever Sins ye retain, they are retained unto them:* *

But why *amuſe*, my Lord? Are the Texts of Holy Scripture to be treated only as Matter of *Amuſement?* Or does your Lordſhip know of any Age in the Church when the very ſame Doctrine which we now teach, has not been taught from the ſame Texts?

Do you know any Succeſſors of the Apoſtles that thought the Power there ſpecified did not belong to them? But, however, your Lordſhip has taught your Laity to believe what we argue from this Text, all Amuſement; and told them, *They may ſecurely anſwer, that it is impoſſible for them to depend upon this Right as any thing certain, till they can prove to you that every thing ſpoken to the Apoſtles, belongs to Miniſters in all Ages.* † The Security of this Anſwer, my Lord, is founded upon this falſe Preſumption, *viz.* That the Clergy can claim no Right to the Exerciſe of any Part of their Office, *as Succeſſors of the Apoſtles*, till they can prove that every Thing that was ſpoken to the Apoſtles, belongs to them.

This Propoſition muſt be true, or elſe there is no Force or *Security* in the Objection you here bring for the Inſtruction of the Laity. If it is well founded, then the Clergy cannot poſſibly prove they have any more Right to the Exerciſe of any Part of their Office than the Laity. Do they pretend to ordain, confirm, to admit or exclude Men from the Sacraments? By what Authority is all this done? Is it not becauſe the Apoſtles, whoſe Succeſſors they are, did the ſame Things? But then, ſay your Lordſhip's well-inſtructed Laity, this is nothing to the Purpoſe: Prove your ſelves Apoſtles; prove that every Thing ſaid

* Page 93. † Page 94.

ſaid to the Apoſtles belongs to you; and then it will be allowed, that you may exerciſe theſe Powers, becauſe they exerciſed them: But as this is impoſſible to be done, ſo it is impoſſible for you to prove that you have any Powers or Authorities, becauſe they had them.

And now, my Lord, if the Caſe be thus, what Apology ſhall we make for Chriſtianity, as it has been practiſed in all Ages? How ſhall we excuſe the Noble Army of Martyrs, Saints, and Confeſſors, who have boldly aſſerted the Right to ſo many Apoſtolical Powers? Could any Men in theſe Ages pretend, *that every thing that was ſpoken to the Apoſtles, belonged to themſelves?* Falſe, then, was their Claim, and preſumptuous their Authority, who ſhould pretend any Apoſtolical Powers, becauſe the Apoſtles had them; when they could not prove, *that every thing that was ſpoken to the Apoſtles, belonged to them.*

Farther; To prove that the above-mentioned Text does not confer the Power of Abſolution in the Clergy, you reaſon thus: *Whatever contradicts the Natural Notions of God, and the Deſign and Tenor of the Goſpel, cannot be the true Meaning of any Paſſage in the Goſpel: But to make the Abſolution of weak and fallible Men ſo neceſſary, or ſo valid, that God will not pardon without them; or that all are pardoned who have them pronounced over them, is to contradict thoſe Notions, as well as the plain Tenor of the Goſpel.* *

Be pleaſed, my Lord, to point out your Adverſary; name any one Church of *England* Man that ever taught this romantic Doctrine which you are confuting. Who ever taught ſuch a Neceſſity of Abſolutions, that God will pardon none without them? Who ever declared that all are pardoned who have them pronounced over them? We teach the *Neceſſity* and *Validity* of Sacraments; but do we ever declare that all are ſaved who receive them? Is there

* Page 93.

no *Medium* between two Extremes? No such Thing, my Lord, as *Moderation!* Must every Thing be thus absolute and extravagant, or nothing at all?

In another Page we have more of this same Colouring: *But to claim a Right to stand in God's Stead, in such a Sense, that they can absolutely and certainly bless, or not bless, with their Voice alone: This is the highest Absurdity and Blasphemy, as it supposeth God to place a Set of Men above himself; and to put out of his own Hands the Disposal of his Blessings and Curses.* *

If your Lordship had employed all this Oratory against worshipping the Sun or Moon, it had just affected your Adversaries as much as this. For who ever taught that any Set of Men could *absolutely* bless, or with-hold Blessing, independent of God? Who ever taught, that the Christian Religion, or Sacraments, or Absolution, saved People on course, or without proper Dispositions? Whoever claimed such an absolving Power, as to set himself above God, and to take from him the Disposal of his own Blessings and Curses? What has such extravagant Descriptions, such romantic Characters of Absolution, to do with that Power the Clergy justly claim? Cannot there be a Necessity in some Cases of receiving Absolution from their Hands, except they set themselves above God? Is God robbed of the Disposal of his Blessings, when, in Obedience to his own Commands, and in virtue of his own Authority, they admit some as Members of the Church, and exclude others from the Communion of it? Do they pretend to be Channels of Grace, or the Means of Pardon, by any Rights or Powers naturally inherent in them? Do they not in all these Things consider themselves as Instruments of God, that are made ministerial to the Edification of the Church, purely by his Will, and only so far as they act in Conformity to it? Now if it has pleased God to confer the Holy Ghost in

* Page 91.

in Ordination, Confirmation, &c. only by them, and to annex the Grace of Pardon to the Impoſition of their Hands, on returning Sinners; is it any *Blaſphemy* for them to claim and exert their Power? Is the Prerogative of God injured, becauſe his own Inſtitutions are obeyed? Cannot he diſpenſe his Graces by what Perſons, and on what Terms he pleaſes? Is he deprived of the Diſpoſal of his Bleſſings, becauſe they are beſtowed on Perſons according to his Order, and in Obedience to his Authority? If I ſhould affirm, that Biſhops have the ſole Power to ordain and confirm, would this be robbing God of his Diſpoſal of thoſe Graces that attend ſuch Actions? Is it not rather allowing and ſubmitting to God's own Diſpoſal, when we keep cloſe to thoſe Methods of it which himſelf has preſcribed?

Pray, my Lord, conſider the Nature of Sacraments. Are not they neceſſary to Salvation? But is God therefore excluded from any Power of his own? Has he for that Reaſon, ſet Bread and Wine in the Euchariſt, or Water in Baptiſm, above Himſelf? Has he put the Salvation of Men out of his own Power, becauſe it depends on his own Inſtitutions? Is the Salvation of Chriſtians leſs his own Act and Deed, or leſs the Effect of his own Mercy, becauſe theſe Sacraments in great meaſure contribute to effect it? Why then, my Lord, muſt that Impoſition of Hands that is attended with his Grace and Pardon, and which has no Pretence to ſuch Grace, but in Obedience to his Order, and in virtue of his Promiſe, be thus deſtructive of his Prerogative? Where is there any Diminution of his Honour or Authority, if ſuch Actions of the Clergy are made neceſſary to the Salvation of Souls in ſome Circumſtances, as their waſhing in Water, or their receiving Bread and Wine? Cannot God inſtitute Means of Grace, but thoſe Means muſt needs be above himſelf? They owe all their Power and Efficacy to his Inſtitution,

and can operate no farther than the Ends for which he inſtituted them. How then is he dethroned for being thus obeyed?

My Lord, you take no notice of Scripture; but in a new Way of your own, contend againſt this Power, from the Nature of the Thing: Yet I muſt beg leave to ſay, this Power ſtands upon as ſure a Bottom, and is as conſiſtent with the Goodneſs and Majeſty of God, as the Sacraments. If the annexing Grace to Sacraments, and making them neceſſary Means of Salvation, be a reaſonable Inſtitution of God; ſo is his annexing Pardon to the Impoſition of Hands by the Clergy on returning Sinners. The Grace or Bleſſing received in either Caſe, is of his own giving, and in a Method of his own preſcribing. And how this ſhould be any Injury to God's Honour, or Affront to his Majeſty, cannot eaſily be accounted for.

The Clergy juſtly claim a Power of reconciling Men to God, from expreſs Terms of Scripture; and of delivering his Pardons to penitent Sinners. Your Lordſhip diſowns this Claim, as making fallible Men the abſolute Diſpenſers of God's Bleſſings, and putting it in their Power to damn and ſave as they pleaſe. But, my Lord, nothing of this Extravagance is included in it. They are only entruſted with a *conditional* Power; which they are to exerciſe according to the Rules God has given; and it only obtains its Effect when it is ſo exerciſed. Every inſtituted Means of Grace is *conditional*; and is only then effectual, when it is attended with ſuch Circumſtances, as are required by God. If the Clergy, through Weakneſs, Paſſion or Prejudice, exclude Perſons from the Church of God, they injure only themſelves. But, my Lord, are theſe Powers nothing, becauſe they may be exerciſed in vain? Have the Clergy no right at all to them, becauſe they are not *abſolutely infallible* in the Exerciſe of them?

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Can you prove, my Lord, that they are not neceſſary, becauſe they have not always the ſame Effect? May not that be neceſſary to Salvation, which is only effectual on *certain Conditions?* Is not the Chriſtian Religion neceſſary to Salvation, though all Chriſtians are not ſaved? Are not the Sacraments neceſſary Means of Grace, though the Means of Grace obtained thereby is only conditional? Is every one neceſſarily improved in Grace, who receives the Sacrament? Or is it leſs neceſſary, becauſe the ſalutary Effects of it are not more univerſal? Why then muſt the Impoſition of Hands be leſs neceſſary, becauſe the Grace of it is conditional, and only obtained in due and proper Circumſtances? Is Abſolution nothing, becauſe if withheld wrongfully, it injures not the Perſon who is denied it; and if given without due Diſpoſitions in the Penitent, it avails nothing? Is not this equally true of the Sacraments, if they are denied wrongfully, or adminiſtred to unprepared Receivers? But do they therefore ceaſe to be ſtanding and neceſſary Means of Grace?

The Argument therefore againſt this Power, drawn from the Ignorance or Paſſions of the Clergy, whereby they may miſtake or pervert the Application of it, can be of no Force; ſince it is as conditional as any other Chriſtian Inſtitution. The Salvation of no Man can be endangered by the Ignorance or Paſſions of any Clergymen in the Uſe of this Power: If they err in the Exerciſe of it, the Conſequences of their Error only affect themſelves. The Adminiſtration of the Sacraments is certainly entruſted to them: But will any one ſay, that the Sacraments are not neceſſary to Salvation; becauſe they may, through Ignorance or Paſſion, make an ill Uſe of this Truſt?

There is nothing in this Doctrine to gratify the Pride of Clergymen, or encourage them to lord it over the Flock of Chriſt. If you could ſuppoſe an

Atheiſt or a Deiſt in Orders; he might be arrogant and domineer in the Exerciſe of his Powers: But who, that has the leaſt Senſe of Religion, can think it matter of Triumph, that he can deny the Sacraments, or refuſe his Benediction to any of his Flock? Can he injure or offend the leaſt of theſe; and will not God take Account? Or, if they fall through his Offence, will not their Blood be required at his Hands?

Neither is there any thing in it that can enſlave the Laity to the Clergy; or make their Salvation depend upon their arbitrary Will. Does any one think his Salvation in danger, becauſe the Sacraments (the neceſſary means of it) are only to be adminiſtered by the Clergy? Why then muſt the Salvation of *Penitents* be endangered, or made dependent on the ſole Pleaſure of the Clergy; becauſe they alone can reconcile them to the Favour of God? If Perſons are unjuſtly denied the Sacraments, they may humbly hope, that God will not lay the Want of them to their Charge. And if they are unjuſtly kept out of the Church, and denied Admittance, they have no Reaſon to fear but God will notwithſtanding accept them, provided they be in other reſpects proper Objects of his Favour.

But to proceed, your Lordſhip ſays, *The Apoſtles might poſſibly underſtand the Power of remitting and retaining Sins, to be that Power of laying their Hands upon the Sick.*

Is this *poſſible*, my Lord? Then it is *poſſible*, the Apoſtles might think, that in the Power here intended to be given them, *nothing at all* was intended to be given them. For the Power of healing the Sick, was already conferred upon them. Therefore, if no more was intended to be given them in this Text, it cannot be interpreted, as having entitled them properly to any Power at all.

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2. The Power mentioned here, was ſomething that Jeſus promiſed he would give them hereafter: Which plainly ſuppoſes they had it not then: But they then had the Power of *Healing*; therefore ſomething elſe muſt be intended here.

3. The Power of the *Keys* has always been looked upon as the higheſt in the Apoſtolical Order. But if it related only to the Power of Healing, it could not be ſo: For the *Seventy*, who were inferior to the Apoſtles, had this Power.

4. The very Manner of Expreſſion in this Place, proves, that the Power here intended to be given, could not relate to *Healing the Sick*, or to any thing of that Nature; but to ſome *ſpiritual Power*, whoſe Effects ſhould not be *viſible*; but be made good by virtue of God's Promiſe. Thus, *whomſoever ye ſhall* heal *on Earth*, I will heal *in Heaven*, borders too near upon an Abſurdity. There is no Occaſion to promiſe to make *good* ſuch Actions as are good already, and have antecedently produced their Effects. Perſons who were reſtored to Health, to their Sight, or the Uſe of their Limbs, did not want to be aſſured, that the Apoſtles, by whom they were reſtored, had the Power to that End; the Exerciſe of which Power proved and confirmed itſelf. There was no need therefore of a Divine Aſſurance, that a Perſon that was healed, was actually healed in vertue of it. But when we conſider this Promiſe, as relating to a *Power* whoſe *Effects* are not *viſible*, as the *Pardon of Sins*, the Terms whereby it is expreſt, are moſt proper; and it is very reaſonable to ſuppoſe God promiſing, that the ſpiritual Powers exerciſed by his Miniſters on Earth, though they do not here produce their *viſible Effects*, ſhall yet be made good and effectual by him in *Heaven*.

Theſe Reaſons, my Lord, I ſhould think, are ſufficient to convince any one, that the Apoſtles

could not *poſſibly* underſtand theſe Words in the Senſe of your Lordſhip.

Let us now conſider the Commiſſion given to *Peter*. Our Saviour ſaid to him, *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church, and the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it: And I will grant unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatſoever thou ſhalt bind on Earth, ſhall be bound in Heaven; and whatſoever thou ſhalt looſe on Earth, ſhall be looſed in Heaven.*

Now, my Lord, how ſhould it enter into the Thoughts of *Peter*, that nothing was here intended, or promiſed by our Saviour, but a Power of Healing; which he not only had before, but alſo many other Diſciples, who were not Apoſtles? *I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*; that is, according to your Lordſhip, *I will give thee Power to heal the Sick.* Can any thing be more contrary to the plain obvious Senſe of the Words? Can any one be ſaid to have the *Keys* of the Kingdom of Heaven, becauſe he may be the Inſtrument of reſtoring People to Health? Are Perſons Members of Chriſt's Kingdom, with any regard to Health? How then can he have any Power in that Kingdom; or be ſaid to have the *Keys* of it, who is only empowered to cure Diſtempers? Could any one be ſaid to have the *Keys* of a temporal Kingdom, who had no temporal Power given him in that Kingdom? Muſt not he therefore who has the *Keys* of a ſpiritual Kingdom, have ſome ſpiritual Power in that Kingdom?

Chriſt has told us, that his Kingdom is not of this World. Your Lordſhip has told us, that it is ſo foreign to every thing of this World, that no *worldly Terrors* or Allurements, no Pains or Pleaſures of the Body, can have any thing to do with it. Yet here your Lordſhip teaches us, that he may have the *Keys* of this ſpiritual Kingdom, who has only a Power over Diſeaſes. My Lord, are not Sickneſs

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and Health, Sight and Limbs, Things of this World? Have they not ſome relation to bodily Pleaſures and Pains? How then can a Power about Things wholly confined to this World, be a Power in a Kingdom that is not of this World? The Force of the Argument lies here: Our Saviour has aſſured us, that his Kingdom is not of this World: Your Lordſhip takes it to be of ſo ſpiritual a Nature, that it ought not, nay, that it cannot be encouraged or eſtabliſhed by any worldly Powers. *Our Saviour gives to his Apoſtles the Keys of this Kingdom:* Yet you have ſo far forgotten your own Doctrine, and the Spirituality of this Kingdom, that you tell us, he here gave them a temporal Power of Diſeaſes; though he ſays, they were the *Keys of his Kingdom* which he gave them. Suppoſe any Succeſſor of the Apoſtles ſhould from this Text pretend to the Power of the Sword, to make People Members of this Kingdom: Muſt not the Anſwer be, that he miſtakes the Power, by not conſidering, that they are only the *Keys* of a *ſpiritual*, not of a temporal Kingdom, which were here delivered to the Apoſtles.

I humbly preſume, my Lord, that this would be as good an Anſwer to your Lordſhip's Doctrine, as to theirs who claim the Right of the Sword, till it can be ſhewn that *Health* and *Sickneſs*, *Sight* and *Limbs*, do not as truly relate to the Things of this World as the Power of the Sword.

If this Power of the Keys muſt be underſtood, only as a Power of inflicting or curing Diſeaſes; then the Words, in the proper Conſtruction of them, muſt run thus: *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church*, i. e. a peculiar Society of healthful People, *and the Gates of Hell ſhall never prevail againſt it*, i. e. they ſhall always be in a State of Health. *I will give unto thee the Keys of this Kingdom of Heaven*, i. e. thou ſhalt have the Power of inflicting and curing Diſtempers; *and whatſoever thou ſhalt bind*

bind on Earth, ſhall be bound in Heaven, i. e. on whomſoever thou ſhalt inflict the Leproſy on Earth, he ſhall be a Leper in Heaven; *and whatſoever thou ſhalt looſe on Earth, ſhall be looſed in Heaven*, i. e. whomſoever thou ſhalt cure of that Diſeaſe on Earth, ſhall be perfectly cured of it in Heaven.

This, without putting any Force upon the Words, is your Lordſhip's own Interpretation; which expoſes the Honour and Authority of Scriptures as much as the greateſt Enemy to them can wiſh. If our Saviour could mean by theſe Words, only a *Power* of *healing Diſtempers*; or if the Apoſtles underſtood them in that Senſe, we may as well believe that when he ſaid, *His Kingdom was not of this World*, that he meant, it was of this World; and that the Apoſtles ſo underſtood him too.

But, however, for the Benefit and Edification of the Laity, your Lordſhip has another Interpretation for them: You ſay, *if they* (the Apoſtles) *did apply this Power of remitting Sins to the certain Abſolution of particular Perſons, it is plain, they could do it upon no other Bottom but this; that God's Will and good Pleaſure about ſuch particular Perſons was infallibly communicated to them.*

Pray, my Lord, how, or where is this ſo plain? Is it plain that they never baptized Perſons till God had *infallibly communicated his good Pleaſure to them about ſuch particular Perſons?* Baptiſm is an Inſtitution equally ſacred with this other, and puts the Perſon baptized in the ſame State of Grace *that Abſolution* does the Penitent. Baptiſm is deſigned for the Remiſſion of Sin. It is an Ordinance to which Abſolution is conſequent; but I ſuppoſe Perſons may be baptized without ſuch *infallible Communication* promiſed, as your Lordſhip contends for. If therefore it be not neceſſary for the Exerciſe of Abſolution by Baptiſm, why muſt it be neceſſary for Abſolution by the Impoſition of Hands?

Can

Can Paſtors without Infallibility baptize Heathens, and abſolve, or be the Inſtruments of abſolving them thereby from their Sins? Are they not as able to abſolve Chriſtian Penitents, or reſtore thoſe who have apoſtatized? If human Knowledge, and the common Rules of the Church, be ſufficient to direct the Prieſt to whom he ought to adminiſter the Sacraments; they are alſo ſufficient for the Exerciſe of this other Part of the ſacerdotal Office.

But your Lordſhip proceeds thus: *Not that they* themſelves *abſolved any.*

No, my Lord, no more than Water in Baptiſm of *it ſelf* purifies the Soul from Sin. This baptiſmal Water is, notwithſtanding, neceſſary for the Remiſſion of our Sins.

Again, you ſay, *Not that God was obliged to bind and looſe the Guilt of Men according to their Declarations, conſidered as their own Deciſions, and their own Determinations.* No, my Lord; who ever thought ſo? God is not obliged to confer Grace by the *baptiſmal Water*, conſidered only as *Water*; but he is, conſidered as *his own Inſtitution* for that End and Purpoſe. So if theſe Declarations are conſidered only as *the Declarations of Men*, God is not obliged by them: But when they are conſidered as the Declarations of *Men* whom he has eſpecially authorized to make *ſuch* Declarations in his Name, then they are as effectual with God, as any other of his Inſtitutions whatever.

I proceed now to a Paragraph that bears as hard upon our Saviour, as ſome others have done upon his Apoſtles and their Succeſſors; where your Lordſhip deſigns to prove, that though Chriſt claimed a Power of remitting Sins himſelf, or in his own Perſon, yet that he really had no ſuch Power.

You go on in theſe Words: *If we look back upon our Saviour himſelf, we ſhall find, that when he declares that the Son of Man had Power upon Earth to forgive Sins, even he himſelf either meant by it the Power*

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of a miraculous releasing Man from his Affliction; or if it related to another more spiritual Sense of the Words, the Power of declaring, that the Man's Sins were forgiven by God. *

The Words of our Saviour, which we are to look back upon, are these: *Whether it is easier to say, thy Sins are forgiven thee; or to say, arise, take up thy Bed and walk? But that ye may know, the Son of Man hath Power on Earth to forgive Sins;* (Mark ii. 9, 10.) As if he had said, "Is not the same Divine Au-"rity and Power required? Is it not a Work as "peculiar to God, to perform miraculous Cures, "as to forgive Sins? The Reason therefore why I "now chuse to declare my Authority, rather by "saying, *Thy Sins are forgiven thee*, than by saying, "*Arise and walk*, was purely to teach you this "Truth, that the Power of the Son of Man is "not confined to Bodily Cures; but that he has "Power on Earth to forgive Sins."

This, my Lord, is the first obvious Sense of the Words; and therefore I take it to be the true Sense. But your Lordship can look back upon them, till you find that Christ has not this Power, though he claims it expressly; but that he only intends a Power of doing *something or other*, which no more imports a Power of forgiving Sins, than of remitting any temporal Debt or Penalty.

If our blessed Saviour had intended to teach the World that he was invested with this Power, I would gladly know how he must have expressed himself, to have satisfied your Lordship that he really had it? He must have told you, that he had not this Power, and then possibly your Lordship would have taught us, that he had this Power. For no one can discover any Reason why you should deny it him, but because he has in express Words claimed and asserted it. I hope your Lordship has not so low an Opinion of

* *Preservative*, p. 94.

of our Saviour's Perſon, as to think it unreaſonable in the Nature of the Thing, that he ſhould have this Power. Where does it contradict any Principle of Reaſon, to ſay, that a *King* ſhould be able to pardon his Subjects? Since there is no Abſurdity then in the Thing it ſelf, and it is ſo expreſsly aſſerted in Scripture; it is juſt Matter of Surprize, that your Lordſhip ſhould carry your Reader from a plain conſiſtent Senſe of the Words, to *either this or that*, *Something or other*, the Origin whereof is only to be ſought for in your Lordſhip's own Invention; rather than not exclude Chriſt from a Power which he declared he had, and declared he had it for this very Reaſon, *that we might know that he had it.* Our Saviour has told us that the Way to Heaven is *narrow.* Your Lordſhip might as reaſonably prove from hence, that he meant, it was *broad*, as that he did not mean he could forgive Sins, when he ſaid, *that ye may know*, *that the Son of Man hath Power on Earth to forgive Sins.*

Your Lordſhip has rejected all *Church Authority*, and deſpiſed the pretended *Powers* of the Clergy, for this Reaſon; becauſe Chriſt is the *ſole King*, *ſole Lawgiver*, *and Judge in his Kingdom.* But, it ſeems, your Lordſhip, notwithſtanding, thinks it now Time to depoſe him: And this *ſole King* in *his own Kingdom*, muſt not be allowed to be capable of pardoning his own Subjects.

This Doctrine, my Lord, is delivered, I ſuppoſe, as your other Doctrines, out of a hearty Concern and *Chriſtian* Zeal for the Privileges of the Laity; and to ſhew that your Lordſhip is not only able to limit as you pleaſe the Authority of *temporal Kings*; but alſo to make Chriſt himſelf *ſole King*, and yet *no King*, in his Spiritual Kingdom. For, my Lord, the Kingdom of Chriſt is a Society founded in order to the Reconciliation of Sinners to God. If therefore Chriſt could not pardon Sins, to what End could

could he either erect, or how could he support his Kingdom, which is only, in the great and last Design of it, to consist of absolved Sinners? He that cannot forgive Sins in a Kingdom that is erected for the Remission of Sins, can no more be *sole King* in it, than he that has no *temporal Power*, can be *sole King* in a *temporal Kingdom*. Therefore your Lordship has been thus mighty serviceable to the Christian Laity, as to teach them that Christ is not only *sole King*, but *no King* in his Kingdom.

This is not the first Contradiction your Lordship has unhappily fallen into, in your Attempts upon *kingly Authority*. Nor is it the last which I shall presume to observe to the *common Sense* of your Laity.

Again, in this Account of our blessed Saviour, your Lordship has made no Difference between him and his Apostles, as to this *absolving Authority*. For you say, the *great Commission* given to them implied either a Power of releasing Men from their bodily Afflictions; or of declaring such to be pardoned, whom God had assured them that he had pardoned: And this *all* that you here allow to Christ himself.

Your Lordship's calling him so often *King*, and *sole King*, &c. in his Kingdom, and yet making him a *mere Creature* in it, is too like the Insult, and designed Sarcasm of the *Jews*, who, when they had nailed him to the Cross, writ over his Head, *This is the King of the Jews*.

But to proceed: Your Lordship proves, That our Saviour had not the Power of *forgiving Sins*; because *His Way of Expression was, Thy Sins are forgiven thee. This was plainly to acknowledge, and keep up that true Notion, that God alone forgiveth Sins.*

Let us therefore put this Argument in Form. Christ hath affirmed, that he had Power to forgive Sins: But his Way was to say, *Thy Sins are forgiven thee:* Therefore Christ had not Power to forgive Sins. *Q. E. D.*

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It is much your Lordſhip did not recommend this to your Laity, as another *invincible Demonſtration*. For by the Help of it, my Lord, they may prove that our Saviour could no more *heal Diſeaſes*, than *forgive Sins*. As thus; Chriſt indeed pretends to a Power of healing Diſeaſes; but his uſual Way of ſpeaking to the diſeaſed Perſon was, *thy Faith hath made thee whole*; therefore he had not the Power of *healing* Diſeaſes. The Argument has the ſame Force againſt one Power, as againſt the other. If he did not *forgive Sins*, becauſe he ſaid, *Thy Sins are forgiven thee*; no more did he heal Diſeaſes, becauſe he ſaid, *Thy Faith hath made thee whole.*

I have a Claim of ſeveral Debts upon a Man; I forgive him them all, in theſe Words, *Thy Debts are remitted thee.* A philoſophical Wit ſtands by, and pretends to prove, that I had not the Power of remitting theſe Debts; becauſe I ſaid, *Thy Debts are remitted thee.* What can come up to, or equal ſuch *profound Philoſophy*, but the *Divinity* of one who teaches, our Saviour could not forgive Sins, becauſe he ſaid, *Thy Sins are forgiven thee?*

But your Lordſhip ſays, the Reaſon why our Saviour thus expreſſeth himſelf, *Thy Sins are forgiven thee*, "was plainly to keep up that true Notion, that "God alone forgiveth Sins." Therefore, my Lord, according to this Doctrine, our Saviour was obliged not to claim any Power that was *peculiar* or *appropriated* to God *alone*. For if this be an Argument, why he ſhould not *forgive Sins*, it is alſo an Argument that he ought not to claim any other Power, any more than this; which is proper to God, and only belongs to him. But, my Lord, if he did expreſs himſelf thus, that he might not lay Claim to any Thing that was peculiar to God, how came he in ſo many other Reſpects to lay Claim to ſuch Things as are as truly peculiar to God, as the Forgiveneſs of Sins? How came he in ſo many Inſtances

to

to make himſelf equal to God? How came he to ſay, *Ye believe in God, believe alſo in me? And that Men ſhould worſhip the Son, even as the Father?* That he was the Son of God, that he was the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Are not evangelical Faith, Worſhip, and Truſt, Duties that are ſolely due to God? Does he not as much invade the Sovereignty of God, who lays Claim to theſe Duties, as he that pretends *to forgive Sins?* Did not Chriſt alſo give his Diſciples *Power and Authority* over Devils and unclean Spirits, and Power to heal all manner of Diſeaſes?

Now if Chriſt did not aſſume a Power to *forgive Sins*, becauſe God alone could forgive Sins, it is alſo as unaccountable that he ſhould exerciſe other *Authorities* and Powers, which are as ſtrictly peculiar to God as that of forgiving Sins. As if a Perſon ſhould diſown that Chriſt is omniſcient, becauſe Omniſcience is an *Attribute* of God *alone*; and yet confeſs his Omnipotence, which is an Attribute equally *divine*.

But farther, my Lord: Did our Saviour thus deſignedly expreſs himſelf, leſt he ſhould be thought to aſſume any Power which was divine, then it is certain (according to this Opinion) that if he had aſſumed any ſuch Power, or pretended to do what was peculiar to God, he had been the Occaſion of miſleading Men into Error. For if this be a plain Reaſon why he expreſſed himſelf ſo as to diſown this Power, it is plain that if he had owned it, he had been condemned by this Argument, as teaching falſe Doctrine.

Now if this would have been interpretatively falſe Doctrine in Chriſt, to take upon himſelf any Thing that was peculiar to God, the Apoſtles were guilty of propagating this falſe Doctrine. For there is ſcarce any known Attribute or Power of God, but they aſcribe it to our Saviour. They declare him

eternal,

eternal, omnipotent, omniſcient, *&c.* Is it not a *true Notion*, that God alone can create, and is Governor of the Univerſe? Yet the Apoſtles expreſsly aſſure us of Chriſt, that *all Things were created by him*, and that *God hath put all Things in Subjection under his Feet.* 'Tis very ſurprizing that your Lordſhip ſhould exclude Chriſt from this Power of *forgiving* Sins, though he has expreſsly ſaid he could forgive Sins, becauſe ſuch a Power belongs only to God: When it appears through the whole Scripture, that there is ſcarce any divine Power which our Saviour himſelf has not claimed, nor any Attribute of God but what his Apoſtles have aſcribed to him. They have made him the *Creator*, the *Preſerver*, the *Governor* of the Univerſe, the Author of eternal Salvation to all that obey him; and yet your Lordſhip tells us, that he did not pretend to *forgive Sins*, becauſe that was a Power peculiar to God.

Here is then (to ſpeak in your Lordſhip's elegant Style) an *immoveable Reſting-place* for your Laity to ſet their Feet upon; here is an *Argument that will laſt them for ever:* They muſt believe that our Saviour did not forgive Sins, *becauſe* this was a Power that belonged to God, though the Scriptures aſſure us, that every other divine Power belonged to Chriſt. That is, they muſt believe, that though our Saviour claimed all divine Powers, yet not this divine Power, *becauſe* it is a divine Power. And, my Lord, if they have the common Senſe to believe this, they may alſo believe, that though our Saviour took human Nature upon him, yet that he had not a human Soul, becauſe it is proper to Man. They may believe, that any Perſon who has all kingly Power, cannot remit or reprieve a Malefactor, *becauſe* it is an Act of kingly Power to do it; or that a Biſhop cannot ſuſpend any Offender of his Dioceſe, becauſe it is an Act of epiſcopal Power to do it. All theſe Reaſons are as ſtrong and demonſtrative, as that Chriſt

who claimed all divine Powers, could not forgive Sins, *becauſe* it was a *divine Power.*

Laſtly, In this Argument your Lordſhip has plainly declared againſt the Divinity of Chriſt, and ranked him in the Order of Creatures. Your Lordſhip ſays, Chriſt did not forgive Sins, becauſe it is God *alone who can forgive Sins*; as plain an Argument as can be offered, that in your Lordſhip's Opinion Chriſt is not God: For if you believed him, in a true and proper Senſe, God, how could you exclude him from the Power of forgiving Sins, *becauſe* God alone can forgive Sins? It is inconſiſtent with Senſe and Reaſon to deny this Power to Chriſt becauſe it is a divine Power, but only becauſe you believe him not to be a divine Perſon. If Chriſt was God, then he might forgive Sins, though God alone can forgive Sins: But you ſay, Chriſt cannot forgive Sins, becauſe God *alone* can forgive Sins; therefore it is plain, that, according to your Lordſhip's Doctrine, Chriſt is not truly, or in a proper Senſe, God.

Here, my Lord, I deſire again to appeal to the *common Senſe* of your Laity; let them judge betwixt the Scriptures and your Lordſhip. The Scriptures plainly and frequently aſcribe all divine Attributes to Chriſt: They make him the Creator and Governor of the World; God over all, bleſſed for ever. Yet your Lordſhip makes him a Creature, and denies him *ſuch* a Power, becauſe it belongs only to God.

You your ſelf, my Lord, have allowed him to be abſolute Ruler over the Conſciences of Men; to be an arbitrary Diſpenſer of the Means of Salvation to Mankind; than which Powers, none can be more divine: And yet you hold, that he cannot forgive Sins, becauſe Pardon of Sin can only be the Effect of a divine Power.

Is it not equally a divine Power, (even according to your Lordſhip) to rule over the Conſciences of Men,

Men, to give Laws of Salvation, and to act in these Affairs with an uncontroulable Power, as *to forgive Sins?*

My Lord, let their common Sense here discover the Absurdity (for I must call it so) of your *new Scheme* of Government in Christ's Kingdom. Christ is *absolute* Lord of it, (according to your self) and can make or unmake Laws relating to it; can dispense or withhold Grace as he pleases in this spiritual Kingdom, all which Powers are purely divine; yet you say he cannot forgive Sins, though every express Power which you have allowed him over the Consciences of Men, be as truly a *divine Power* as that of *forgiving Sins*. Has not Christ a proper and personal Power to give Grace to his Subjects? Is he not Lord over their Consciences? And are not these Powers as truly appropriated to God? And has not your Lordship often taught them to be so, as that of *Forgiveness of Sins?* Is it not as much the Prerogative of God to have any natural intrinsic Power, to confer Grace, or any spiritual Benefit to the Souls of Men, as to forgive Sins? Has not your Lordship despised all the Administrations of the Clergy, because God's Graces can only come from himself, and are only to be received from his own Hands? The Conclusion therefore is this, either Christ has a personal intrinsic Power to confer Grace in his Kingdom, or he has not; if you say he has not, then you are chargeable with the Collusion of making him a King in a spiritual Kingdom, where you allow him no spiritual Power: If you say he has, then you fall into this Contradiction, that you allow him to have divine Powers, though he cannot have divine Powers; that is, you allow him to *give Grace*, though it is a divine Power, and not to *forgive Sins*, because it is a divine Power. My Lord, I wish your Laity (if there be any to whom you can render it intelligible) much Joy of such profound Divinity. Or

if there are others who are more taken with your Lordſhip's Sincerity, I deſire them not to paſs by this following remarkable Inſtance of it: Your Lordſhip has here as plainly declared, as Words can conſequentially declare any Thing, that you do not believe Chriſt to be God, yet profeſs your ſelf Biſhop of a Church, whoſe Liturgy in ſo many repeated Teſtimonies declares the contrary Doctrine, and which obliges you to expreſs your Aſſent and Conſent to ſuch Doctrine. My Lord, I here call upon your *Sincerity*; either declare Chriſt to be perfect God, and then ſhew why he could not *forgive Sins*; or deny him to be perfect God, and then ſhew how you can ſincerely declare your *Aſſent* and *Conſent* to the Doctrine of the Church of *England*.

This, my Lord, has an Appearance of Prevarication, which you cannot, I hope, charge upon any of your Adverſaries, who if they cannot think, that to be ſincere is the only Thing neceſſary to recommend Men to the Favour of God, yet may have as much, or poſſibly more Sincerity, than thoſe who do think ſo.

Before I take Leave of your Lordſhip, I muſt take Notice of a *Reſting-place*, a *ſtrong Retreat*, a *laſting Foundation*, i. e. *a Demonſtration in the ſtricteſt Senſe* of the Words, that all *Church-Communion* is unneceſſary.

Your Lordſhip ſets it out in theſe Words:

I am not now going to accuſe you of a Hereſy againſt Charity, but of a Hereſy againſt the Poſſibility and Nature of Things. As thus, *Mr.* Nelſon *(for Inſtance) thinks himſelf obliged in Conſcience to communicate with ſome of our Church. Upon this you declare he hath no Title to God's Mercy; and you and all the World allow, that if he communicates with you whilſt his Conſcience tells him it is a Sin, he is ſelf-condemned, and out of God's Favour. That Notion (viz.* the Neceſſity of Church-

Church-Communion) *therefore, which implies this great invincible Absurdity, cannot be true.*

Pray, my Lord, what is this wonderous Curiosity of a *Demonstration*, but the common Case of an *erroneous Conscience?* Did the strictest Contenders for Church-Communion ever teach, *that any Terms* are to be complied with against Conscience? But it is a strange Conclusion to infer from thence, that there is no Obligation to Communion, or that all Things are to be held indifferent, because they are not to be complied with against one's Conscience.

The Truths of the Christian Religion have the same Nature and Obligation, whatever our Opinions are of them, and those that are necessary to be believed, continue so, whether we can persuade ourselves to believe them or not. I suppose your Lordship will not say, that the Articles of Faith and necessary Institutions of the Christian Religion, are no otherways necessary, than because we believe them to be so, that our Persuasion is the only Cause of the Necessity; but if their Necessity be not owing merely to our Belief of them, then it is certain that our Disbelief of them cannot make them less necessary. If the Ordinances of Christ, and the Articles of Faith are necessary, because Christ has made them so, that Necessity must continue the same, whether we believe and observe them or not.

So that, my Lord, we may still maintain the Necessity of Church-Communion, and the strict Observance of Christ's Ordinances, notwithstanding that People have different Persuasions in these Matters, presuming *that our Opinions* can no more alter the Nature or Necessity of Christ's Institutions, than we can believe *Error* into *Truth*, *Good* into *Evil*, or *Light* into *Darkness*. I shall think my self no *Heretic against the Nature of Things*, though I tell a *conscientious Socinian*, that the Divinity of Christ is necessary to be believed, or a *conscientious Jew*, that it is

neceſſary to be a Chriſtian in order to be ſaved. But if your Lordſhip's Demonſtration was accepted, we ſhould be obliged to give up the Neceſſity of every Doctrine and Inſtitution, to every Disbeliever that pretended Conſcience. We muſt not tell any Party of People that they are in any Danger for being out of Communion with us, if they do but follow their own Perſuaſion.

Your Lordſhip's *invincible Demonſtration* proceeds thus:

We muſt not inſiſt upon the Neceſſity of joining with any particular Church, becauſe then conſcientious Perſons will be in Danger either Way; for if there be a Neceſſity of it, then there is a Danger if they do not join with it, and if they comply againſt their Conſciences, the Danger is the ſame.

What an inextricable Difficulty is here! How ſhall Divinity or Logic be able to relieve us!

Be pleaſed, my Lord, to accept of this Solution, in lieu of your Demonſtration.

I will ſuppoſe the Caſe of a *conſcientious Jew*; I tell him that Chriſtianity is the only covenanted Method of Salvation, and that he can have no Title to the Favour of God, till he profeſſes the Faith of Chriſt. What, replies he, would you direct me to do? If I embrace Chriſtianity againſt my Conſcience, I am out of God's Favour; and if I follow my Conſcience, and continue a *Jew*, I am alſo out of his Favour. The Anſwer is this, my Lord; The *Jew* is to obey his Conſcience, and to be left to the *uncovenanted*, *unpromiſed* Terms of God's *Mercy*, whilſt the conſcientious Chriſtian is entitled to the *expreſs and promiſed Favours of* God.

There is ſtill the ſame abſolute Neceſſity of believing in Chriſt, Chriſtianity is ſtill the only Method of Salvation; though the ſincere *Jew* cannot ſo perſuade himſelf; and we ought to declare it to all *Jews* and Unbelievers whatſoever, that they can only

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be ſaved by embracing Chriſtianity: That a falſe Religion does not become a true one, nor a true one falſe, in Conſequence of their Opinions; but that if they are ſo unhappy as to refuſe the Covenant of Grace, they muſt be left to ſuch *Mercy* as is without any Covenant. And now, my Lord, what is become of this mighty Demonſtration? Does it prove that Chriſtianity is not neceſſary, becauſe the conſcientious *Jew* may think it is not ſo? It may as well prove that the Moon is no larger than a Man's Head, becauſe an honeſt ignorant Countryman may think it no larger.

Is there any Perſon of *common Senſe*, who would think it a Demonſtration that he is not obliged to go to Church, becauſe a *conſcientious* Diſſenter will not? Could he think it leſs neceſſary to be a Chriſtian, becauſe a *ſincere Jew* cannot embrace Chriſtianity? Could he take it to be an indifferent Matter whether he believed the Divinity of Chriſt, becauſe a *conſcientious Socinian* cannot? Yet this is your Lordſhip's *invincible Demonſtration*, that we ought not to inſiſt upon the Neceſſity of Church-Communion, becauſe a *conſcientious Diſbeliever* cannot comply with it.

A ſmall Degree of *common Senſe*, would teach a Man that true Religion, and the Terms of Salvation, muſt have the ſame obligatory Force, whether we reaſon rightly about them or not; and that they who believe and practiſe according to them, are in expreſs Covenant with God, which entitles them to his Favour; whilſt thoſe who are ſincerely erroneous, have nothing but the Sincerity of their Errors to plead, and are left to ſuch Mercy of God, as is without any Promiſe. Here, my Lord, is nothing frightful or abſurd in this Doctrine; they who are in the Church which Chriſt has founded, are upon Terms which entitle them to God's Favour; they who are out of it, fall to his Mercy.

But your Lordſhip is not content with the Terms of the Goſpel, or a Doctrine that only ſaves a particular Sort of People; this is a narrow View, not wide enough for your Notions of *Liberty*. Particular Religions, and particular Covenants, are *demonſtrated* to be abſurd, *becauſe* particular Perſons may diſbelieve, or not ſubmit to them.

Your Lordſhip muſt have Doctrines that will ſave all People alike, in every way that their Perſuaſion leads them to take: But, my Lord, there needs be no greater Demonſtration againſt your Lordſhip's Doctrine, than that it equally favours every Way of Worſhip; for an Argument which equally proves every Thing, has been generally thought to prove nothing; which happens to be the Caſe of your Lordſhip's *important Demonſtration*.

Your Lordſhip indeed only inſtances in a particular Perſon, Mr. *Nelſon*; but your *Demonſtration* is as ſerviceable to any other Perſon who has left any other Church whatever. The *conſcientious Quaker*, *Muggletonian*, *Independent*, or *Socinian*, &c. has the ſame Right to obey Conſcience, and blame any Church that aſſumes a Power of cenſuring him, as Mr. *Nelſon* had; and if he is cenſured by any Church, that Church is as guilty of the ſame *Hereſy againſt the Nature of Things*, as that Church which cenſured Mr. *Nelſon*, or any Church that ſhould pretend to cenſure any other Perſon whatever.

I am not at all ſurprized that your Lordſhip ſhould teach this Doctrine, but it is ſomething ſtrange that ſuch an Argument ſhould be obtruded upon the World as an unheard-of *Demonſtration*, and that in an *Appeal to common Senſe*. Suppoſe ſome Body or other in Defence of your Lordſhip, ſhould take upon him to demonſtrate to the World that there is no ſuch Thing as Colour, becauſe there are ſome People that cannot ſee; or Sounds, becauſe there are ſome who do not hear them; He would have found

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out the only *Demonſtration* in the World that could equal your Lordſhip's, and would have as much Reaſon to call thoſe *Heretics againſt the Nature of Things*, who ſhould diſbelieve him, and inſiſt upon the Reality of Sounds, as your Lordſhip has to call your Adverſaries ſo.

For is there no Neceſſity of Church-Communion, becauſe there are ſome who do not conceive it? Then there are no Sounds, becauſe there are ſome who do not hear them; for it is certainly as eaſy to believe away the *Truth* and *Reality*, as the *Neceſſity* of Things.

Some People have only taught us the *Innocency of Error*, and been content with ſetting forth its harmleſs Qualities; but your Lordſhip has been a more hearty Advocate, and given it a *Power* over every Truth and Inſtitution of Chriſtianity. If we have but an *erroneous Conſcience*, the whole Chriſtian Diſpenſation is cancelled; all the Truths and Doctrines in the Bible are *demonſtrated* to be unneſſary, if we do not believe them.

How unhappily have the ſeveral Parties of Chriſtians been diſputing for many Ages, who, if they could but have found out this *intelligible Demonſtration*, (from the Caſe of an erroneous Conſcience) would have ſeen the Abſurdity of pretending to neceſſary Doctrines, and inſiſting upon *Church-Communion*; but it muſt be acknowledged your Lordſhip's *new-invented Engine* for the Deſtruction of *Churches*; and it may be expected the *good Chriſtians of no Church* will return your Lordſhip their Thanks for it.

Your Lordſhip has thought it a mighty Objection to ſome Doctrines in the *Church* of *England*, that the Papiſts might make ſome Advantage of them: But yet your own Doctrine defends *all* Communions alike, and ſerve the *Jew* and *Socinian*, &c. as much as any other ſort of People. Though this ſufficiently appears, from what has been already ſaid, yet that

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it may be ſtill more obvious to the *common Senſe* of every one, I ſhall reduce theſe Doctrines to Practice, and ſuppoſe, for once, that your Lordſhip intends to convert a *Jew*, a *Quaker*, or *Socinian*.

Now in order to make a Convert of any of them, theſe Preliminary PROPOSITIONS are to be firſt laid down according to your Lordſhip's Doctrine.

Some *Propoſitions* for the Improvement of true Religion.

Propoſition I. That we are neither more or leſs in the Favour of God, for living in any particular Method or Way of Worſhip, but purely as we are ſincere. *Preſerv.* p. 90.

Prop. II. That no Church ought to unchurch another, or declare it out of God's Favour. *Preſerv.* p. 85.

Prop. III. That nothing loſes us the Favour of God, but a wicked Inſincerity. *Ibid.*

Prop. IV. That a conſcientious Perſon can be in no Danger for being out of any particular Church. *Preſerv.* p. 90.

Prop. V. That there is no ſuch Thing as any real Perfection or Excellency in any Religion, that can *juſtify* our adhering to it, but *that* all is founded in our perſonal Perſuaſion; which your Lordſhip thus proves: *When we left the Popiſh Doctrines, was it becauſe they were* actually *corrupt?* No; *The Reaſon was, becauſe we thought them ſo.* Therefore if we might leave the *Church of Rome*, not becauſe her Doctrines were corrupt, but becauſe we thought them ſo, then the ſame Reaſon will juſtify any one elſe, in leaving any Church; how true ſoever its Doctrines are; and conſequently there is no ſuch Thing as any *real* Perfection or Excellency in any Religion conſidered in it ſelf, but is *right* or *wrong* according to our Perſuaſions about it. *Preſerv.* p. 85.

Prop. VI. That Chriſt is *ſole* King and *Lawgiver* in his Kingdom, that no *Men* have any Power of Legi-

Legiſlation in it; that if we would be good Members of it, we muſt ſhew our ſelves Subjects of Chriſt alone, without any Regard to Man's Judgment.

Prop. VII. That as Chriſt's Kingdom is not of this World, ſo when worldly Encouragements are annexed to it, theſe are ſo many Diviſions againſt Chriſt and his own expreſs Word. *Serm.* p. 11.

Prop. VIII. That to pretend to know the Hearts and Sincerity of Men, is Nonſenſe and Abſurdity. *Serm.* p. 93.

Prop. IX. That God's Graces are only to be received immediately from himſelf. *Serm.* p. 89.

Theſe, my Lord, are your Lordſhip's own Propoſitions, expreſſed in your own Terms, without any Exaggeration.

And now, my Lord, begin as ſoon as you pleaſe, either with a *Quaker*, *Socinian*, or *Jew*; uſe any Argument whatſoever to convert them, and you ſhall have a ſufficient Anſwer from your own Propoſitions.

Will you tell the *Jew* that Criſtianity is neceſſary to Salvation? He will anſwer from *Prop.* I. *That we are neither more or leſs in the Favour of God, for living in any particular Method or Way of Worſhip, but purely as we are ſincere.*

Will your Lordſhip tell him, that the Truth of Chriſtianity is ſo well aſſerted, that there is no Excuſe left for Unbelievers? He will anſwer from Prop. V. *That all Religion is founded in perſonal Perſuaſion; that as your Lordſhip does not believe that Chriſt is come, becauſe he is actually come, but becauſe you think he is come; ſo he does not diſbelieve Chriſt becauſe he is not actually come, but becauſe he thinks he is not come.* So that here, my Lord, the *Jew* gives as good a Reaſon why he is not a Chriſtian, as your Lordſhip does why you are not a Papiſt.

If your Lordſhip ſhould turn the Diſcourſe to a *Quaker*, and offer him any Reaſons for embracing the

the Doctrine of the *Church* of *England*, you cannot possibly have any better Success; any one may see from your *Propositions*, that no Argument can be urged, but what your Lordship has there fully answered. For since you allow nothing to the *Truth* of Doctrines, or the *Excellency* of any Communion as such, it is demonstrable that no Church or Communion can have any Advantage above another, which is absolutely necessary in order to persuade any sensible Man to exchange any Communion for another.

Will your Lordship tell a *Quaker*, that there is any Danger in that particular Way that he is in?

He can answer from *Prop.* I, III, and IV. *That a conscientious Person cannot be in any Danger of being out of any particular Church.*

Will your Lordship tell him that his Religion is condemned by the universal Church?

He can answer from *Prop.* II. *That no Church ought to unchurch another, or declare it out of God's Favour.*

Will you tell him that Christ has instituted Sacraments as *necessary Means* of Grace, which he neglects to observe?

He will answer you from *Prop.* IX. *That God's Graces are only to be received* immediately from himself. And to think that *Bread* and *Wine*, or the sprinkling of Water, is necessary to Salvation, is as absurd, as to think any Order of the Clergy is necessary to recommend us to God.

Will your Lordship tell him that he displeases God, by not holding several Articles of Faith, which Christ has required us to believe?

He can reply from *Prop.* III. *That nothing loses us the Favour of God* but a *wicked Insincerity*. And from *Prop.* V. That as your Lordship believes such Things, not because they are actually to be believed, but because you think so; so he disbelieves them, not because they are actually false, but because he thinks so.

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Will your Lordſhip tell him he is inſincere?

He can reply from *Prop.* VI. *That to aſſume to know the Hearts and Sincerity of Men, is Nonſenſe and Blaſphemy.*

Will your Lordſhip tell him that he ought to conform to a Church eſtabliſhed by the Laws of the Land?

He can anſwer from *Prop.* VIII. That this very *Eſtabliſhment* is an Argument againſt Conformity? *For as Chriſt's Kingdom is not of this World, ſo when worldly Encouragements are annexed to it, they are ſo many Deciſions againſt Chriſt, and his own expreſs Words.* And from *Prop.* VII. *That ſeeing Chriſt is ſole King and Lawgiver in his Kingdom, and no Men have any Power of Legiſlation in it, they who would be good Members of it, muſt ſhew themſelves Subjects to Chriſt alone, without any Regard to Man's Judgment.*

I am inclined to think, my Lord, that it is now *demonſtrated* to the common Senſe of the Laity, that your Lordſhip cannot urge any Argument, either from the *Truth*, the *Advantage*, or *Neceſſity* of embracing the Doctrines of the *Church* of *England*, to either *Jew*, *Heretick*, or *Schiſmatic*, but you have helped him to a full Anſwer to any ſuch Argument, from your own Principles.

Are we, my Lord, to be treated as *popiſhly* affected for aſſerting ſome Truths, which the Papiſts join with us in aſſerting? Is it a Crime in us not to drop ſome neceſſary Doctrines, becauſe the Papiſts have not dropt them? If this is to be *popiſhly* affected, we own the Charge, and are not for being ſuch *true Proteſtants*, as to give up the *Apoſtles Creed*, or lay aſide the Sacraments, becauſe they are received by the Church of *Rome*. I cannot indeed charge your Lordſhip with being *well affected* to the Church of *Rome*, or of *England*, to the *Jews*, the *Quakers*, or *Socinians*; but this I have *demonſtrated*, and will undertake the Defence of it, that your

Lordſhip's

Lordſhip's *Principles* equally ſerve them all alike, and do not give the leaſt Advantage to one Church above another, as has ſufficiently appeared from your *Principles*.

I will no more ſay your Lordſhip is in the Intereſt of the *Quakers*, or *Socinians*, or *Papiſts*, than I would charge you with being in the Intereſt of the Church of *England*; for as your Doctrines equally ſupport them all, he ought to aſk your Lordſhip's Pardon, who ſhould declare you more a Friend to one than the other.

I intended, my Lord, to have conſidered another very obnoxious Article in your Lordſhip's Doctrines concerning the *Repugnancy of temporal Encouragements to the Nature of Chriſt's Kingdom*; but the Conſiſtency and Reaſonableneſs of guarding this ſpiritual Kingdom with human Laws, has been defended with ſo much Perſpicuity and Strength of Argument, and your Lordſhip's Objections ſo fully confuted by the judicious and learned Dean of *Chicheſter*, that I preſume this Part of the Controverſy is finally determined.

I hope, my Lord, that I have delivered nothing here that needs any Excuſe or Apology to the Laity, that they will not be perſuaded, through any vain Pretence of Liberty, to make themſelves Parties againſt the firſt Principles of Chriſtianity; or imagine, that whilſt we contend for the poſitive Inſtitutions of the Goſpel, the Neceſſity of Church-Communion, or the Excellency of our own, we are robbing them of their natural Rights, or interfering with their Privileges. Whilſt we appear in the Defence of any part of Chriſtianity, we are engaged for them in the common Cauſe of Chriſtians; and I am perſuaded better Things of the Laity, than to believe that ſuch Labours will render either our Perſons or Profeſſions hateful to them. Your Lordſhip has indeed endeavoured to give an invidious Turn to

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the Controverſy, by calling upon the Laity to aſſert their Liberties, as if they were in Danger from the Principles of Chriſtianity. ——— But, my Lord, what Liberty does any Layman loſe, by our aſſerting, that *Church-Communion* is neceſſary? What Privilege is taken from them by our teaching the Danger of certain Ways and Methods of Religion? Is a Man made a Slave becauſe he is cautioned againſt the Principles of the *Quakers*, againſt *Fanaticiſm*, *Popery*, or *Socinianiſm?* Is he in a State of Bondage becauſe the Sacraments are neceſſary, and none but epiſcopal Clergy ought to adminiſter them? Is his Freedom deſtroyed becauſe there is a particular Order of Men appointed by God to miniſter in holy Things, and be ſerviceable to him in recommending him to the Favour of God? Can any Perſon, my Lord, think theſe Things Breaches upon their Liberty, except ſuch as think the Commandments a Burden? Is there any more Hardſhip in ſaying thou ſhalt keep to an epiſcopal Church, than thou ſhalt be baptized? Or in requiring People to receive particular Sacraments, than to believe particular Books of Scripture to be the Word of God? If ſome other Advocate for the Laity ſhould, out of Zeal for their Rights, declare that they need not believe one half of the Articles in the Creed, if they would but aſſert their Liberty, he would be as true a Friend, and deſerve the ſame Applauſe, as he who ſhould aſſert the Neceſſity of Church-Communion is inconſiſtent with the natural Rights and Liberties of Mankind.

I am, my LORD,

Your Lordſhip's moſt

Humble Servant,

William Law.

POST-

POSTSCRIPT.

I Hope your Lordſhip will not think it unnatural or impertinent, to offer here a Word or two in Anſwer to ſome Objections againſt my former Letter.

To begin with the Doctrine of the uninterrupted Succeſſion of the Clergy.

I have, as I think, proved that there is a divine Commiſſion required to qualify any one to exerciſe the prieſtly Office, and that ſeeing this divine Commiſſion can only be had from ſuch particular Perſons as God has appointed to give it, therefore it is neceſſary that there ſhould be a continual Succeſſion of ſuch Perſons, in order to keep up a commiſſioned Order of the Clergy. For if the Commiſſion it ſelf be to deſcend through Ages, and diſtinguiſh the Clergy from the Laity; it is certain the Perſons who alone can give this Commiſſion, muſt deſcend through the ſame Ages, and conſequently an uninterrupted Succeſſion is as neceſſary, as that the Clergy have a divine Commiſſion. Take away this Succeſſion, and the Clergy may as well be ordained by one Perſon as another; a Number of Women may as well give them a divine Commiſſion, as a Congregation of any Men; they may indeed appoint Perſons to officiate in holy Orders, for the Sake of *Decency* and *Order*; but then there is no more in it, than an external *Decency* and *Order*; they are no more the Prieſts of God, than thoſe that pretended to make them ſo. If we had loſt the Scriptures, it would be very well to make as good Books as we could, and come as near them as poſſible; but then it would be not only Folly, but Preſumption, to call them the Word of God. But I proceed to the Objections againſt the Doctrine of an uninterrupted Succeſſion.

Firſt, It is ſaid, that there is no mention made of it in Scripture, as having any Relation to the Being of a Church. *Se-*

Secondly, That it is subject to so great Uncertainty, that if it be necessary we cannot now be sure we are in the Church.

Thirdly, That it is a popish Doctrine, and gives them great Advantage over us.

I begin with the *first* Objection, that there is no mention made of it in the Scriptures, which though I think I have sufficiently answered in this Letter, I shall here farther consider.

Pray, my Lord, is it not a true Doctrine, that *the Scriptures contain all Things necessary to Salvation?* But, my Lord, it is no where expresly said, that *the Scriptures contain all Things necessary to Salvation.* It is no where said, that no other Articles of Faith need be believed. Where does it appear in Scripture, that the Scriptures were writ by any divine Command? Have any of the Gospels or Epistles this Authority to recommend them? Are they necessary to be believed, because there is any Law of Christ concerning the Necessity of believing them?

May I reject this uninterrupted Succession, because it is not mentioned in Scripture? And may I not as well reject all the Gospels? Produce your Authority, my Lord, mention your Texts of Scripture, where Christ has *hung the Salvation of Men* upon their believing that St. *Matthew* or St. *John* wrote such a Book seventeen hundred years ago. These, my Lord, are *Niceties* and *Trifles* which are not to be found in Scripture, and consequently have nothing to do with the Salvation of Men.

Now if nothing be to be held as necessary, but what is expresly required in so many Words in Scripture, then it can never be proved that the Scriptures themselves are a *standing Rule of Faith in all Ages*, since it is no where expresly asserted, nor is it any where said, that the Scriptures should be continued as a Rule of Faith in all Ages. Is it an Objection against the Necessity of a perpetual Succession of

the Clergy, that it is not mentioned in the Scripture? And is it not as good a one againſt the *Neceſſity* of making Scripture the *ſtanding Rule of Faith in all Ages*, ſince it is never ſaid that they were to be continued as a ſtanding Rule in all Ages? If Things are only neceſſary for being ſaid to be ſo in Scripture, then all that are not thus taught are equally unneceſſary, and conſequently it is no more neceſſary that the Scripture ſhould be a fixed Rule of Faith in all Ages, than that there ſhould be Biſhops to ordain in all Ages.

Again, Where ſhall we find it in Scripture, that the Sacraments are to be continued in every Age of the Church? Where is it ſaid that they ſhall always be the ordinary Means of Grace neceſſary to be obſerved? Is there any Law of Chriſt, any Text of Scripture, that expreſsly aſſerts, that if we leave the Uſe of the Sacraments, we are out of Covenant with God? Is it any where directly ſaid, that we muſt never lay them aſide, or that they will be *perpetually* neceſſary? No, my Lord, this is a *Nicety* and *Trifle* not to be *found in Scripture: There is no Streſs laid there upon this Matter*, but upon Things *of a quite different Nature*.

I now preſume, my Lord, that every one who has common Senſe plainly ſees, that if this Succeſſion of the Clergy is to be deſpiſed, becauſe it is not expreſsly required in Scripture; it undeniably follows, that we may reject the Scriptures, as not being a *ſtanding Rule of Faith in all Ages*; we may diſuſe the Sacraments, as not the *ordinary Means of Grace in all Ages*; ſince theſe are no more mentioned in the Scriptures, or *expreſsly* required, than this uninterrupted Succeſſion.

If it be a good Argument againſt the Neceſſity of epiſcopal Ordainers, that it is never ſaid in Scripture that there ſhall *always* be ſuch Ordainers; it is certainly as concluſive againſt the Uſe of the Sacraments

ments in every Age, that it is no where said in Scripture they shall be used in *all Ages*.

If no Government or Order of the Clergy is to be held as necessary, because no such Necessity is asserted in Scripture; it is certain, this concludes as strongly against *Government*, and *the Order itself*, as against any *particular* Order. For it is no more said in Scripture that there shall be an Order of Clergy, than that there shall be any *particular* Order; therefore if this Silence proves against any *particular* Order of Clergy, it proves as much against *Order it self*.

Should therefore any of your Lordship's Friends have so much Church-Zeal, as to contend for the Necessity of *some Order*, though of no particular Order; he must fall under your Lordship's Displeasure, and be proved as meer a *Dreamer* and *Trifler*, as those who assert the Necessity of episcopal Ordination. For if it be plain that there need be no *episcopal Clergy*, because it is not said there shall *always* be episcopal Clergy; it is undeniably plain that there need be *no Order* of the Clergy, since it is no where said, there shall be *an Order* of Clergy: Therefore whoever shall contend for an Order of Clergy, will be as much condemned by your Lordship's Doctrine, as he that declares for the episcopal Clergy.

The Truth of the Matter is this; if nothing is to be esteemed of any Moment, but counted as mere *Trifle* and *Nicety* among Christians, which is not *expresly* required in the Scriptures; then it is a *Trifle* and *Nicety*, whether we believe the Scriptures to be a *standing Rule of Faith* in all Ages, whether we use the Sacraments in *all Ages*, whether we have any Clergy at all, whether we observe the Lord's Day, whether we baptize our Children, or whether we go to publick Worship; for none of these Things are expresly required in so many Words in Scripture. But if your Lordship, with the rest of the Christian

World, will take these Things to be of Moment, and well proved, because they are founded in Scripture, though not in *express Terms*, or under *plain Commands*; if you will acknowledge these Matters to be well asserted, because they may be gathered from Scripture, and are confirmed by the universal Practice of the Church in all Ages, (which is all the Proof that they are capable of,) I do not doubt but it will appear, that this *successive Order of the Clergy* is founded on the same Evidence, and supported by as great Authority, so that it must be thought of the same Moment with these Things by all unprejudiced Persons.

For, my Lord, though it be not expressly said, that there shall *always* be a *Succession of Episcopal Clergy*, yet it is a Truth founded in Scripture it self, and asserted by the universal Voice of Tradition in the first and succeeding Ages of the Church.

It is thus founded in Scripture: There we are taught that the Priesthood is a *positive Institution*; that no Man can take this Office unto himself; that neither our Saviour himself, nor his Apostles, nor any other Person, however extraordinarily endowed with Gifts from God, could, *as such*, exercise the priestly Office, till they had God's express Commission for that Purpose. Now how does it appear, that the Sacraments are positive Institutions, but that they are consecrated to such Ends and Effects, as of themselves they were no way qualified to perform? Now as it appears from Scripture that Men, *as such*, however endowed, were not qualified to take this Office upon them without God's Appointment; it is demonstratively certain, that Men so called are as much to be esteemed a *positive Institution*, as Elements so chosen can be called a *positive Institution*. All the personal Abilities of Men conferring no more Authority to exercise the Office of a Clergyman, than the natural Qualities of Water to make a Sacrament:

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So that the one Inſtitution is as truly poſitive as the other.

Again, The Order of the Clergy is not only a *poſitive* Order inſtituted by God, but the different Degrees in this Order are of the ſame Nature. For we find in Scripture, that ſome Perſons could perform ſome Offices in the Prieſthood, which neither Deacons nor Prieſts could do, though thoſe Deacons and Prieſts were inſpired Perſons, and Workers of Miracles. Thus *Timothy* was ſent to ordain Elders, becauſe none below his Order, who was a Biſhop, could perform that Office. *Peter* and *John* laid their Hands on baptized Perſons, becauſe neither Prieſts nor Deacons, though Workers of Miracles, could execute that Part of the ſacerdotal Office.

How can we imagine that the Apoſtles and Biſhops thus diſtinguiſhed themſelves for nothing? That there was the ſame Power in *Deacons* and *Prieſts* to execute thoſe Offices, though they took them to themſelves? No, my Lord; if three Degrees in the Miniſtry are inſtituted in Scripture, we are obliged to think them as truly diſtinct in their Powers, as we are to think that the Prieſthood it ſelf contains Powers that are diſtinct from thoſe of the Laity. It is no more conſiſtent with Scripture, to ſay that *Deacons* or *Prieſts* may ordain, than that the Laity are Prieſts or Deacons. The ſame divine Inſtitution making as truly a Difference betwixt the Clergy, as it does betwixt Clergy and Laity.

Now if the Order of the Clergy be a *divine poſitive* Inſtitution, in which there are different Degrees of Power, where ſome alone can ordain, *&c.* whilſt others can only perform other Parts of the ſacred Office; if this (as it plainly appears) be a Doctrine of Scripture, then it is a Doctrine of Scripture, that there is a Neceſſity of ſuch a Succeſſion of Men as have Power to ordain. For do the Scriptures make it neceſſary that *Timothy* (or ſome Biſhop) ſhould be

ſent to *Epheſus* to ordain Prieſts, becauſe the Prieſts who were there could not ordain? And do not the ſame Scriptures make it as neceſſary, that *Timothy*'s Succeſſor be the only Ordainer, as well as he was in his Time? Will not Prieſts in the next Age be as deſtitute of the Power of ordaining, as when *Timothy* was alive? So that ſince the Scriptures teach, that *Timothy*, or Perſons of his Order, could *alone* ordain in that Age, they as plainly teach, that the Succeſſors of that Order can *alone* ordain in any Age, and conſequently the Scriptures plainly teach a Neceſſity of an *epiſcopal Succeſſion*.

The Scriptures declare there is a Neceſſity of a divine Commiſſion to execute the Office of a Prieſt; they alſo teach, that this Commiſſion can only be had from particular Perſons: Therefore the Scriptures plainly teach, there is a Neceſſity of a *Succeſſion of ſuch particular Perſons*, in order to keep up a truly *commiſſioned Clergy*.

Suppoſe when *Timothy* was ſent to *Epheſus* to ordain Elders, the Church had told him, We have choſe Elders already, and laid our Hands upon them; that if he alone was allowed to exerciſe this Power, it might ſeem as if he alone had it; or that Miniſters were the better for being ordained by his particular Hands; and that ſome Perſons might imagine they could have no Clergy, except they were ordained by him, or ſome of his Order; and that ſeeing Chriſt had no where made an expreſs Law, that ſuch Perſons ſhould be neceſſary to the Ordination of the Clergy; therefore they rejected this Authority of *Timothy*, leſt they ſhould ſubject themſelves to *Niceties* and *Trifles*.

Will your Lordſhip ſay, that ſuch a Practice would have been allowed of in the *Epheſians?* Or that Miniſters ſo ordained would have been received as the Miniſters of Chriſt? If not, why muſt ſuch Practice or ſuch Miniſters be allowed of in any After-

ages?

ages? Would not the same Proceeding against any of *Timothy*'s *Successors* have deserved the same Censure, as being equally unlawful? If therefore the Scripture condemns all Ordination but what is episcopal, the Scriptures make a *Succession* of *episcopal Ordainers* necessary. So that I hope, my Lord, we shall be no more told that this is a Doctrine not mentioned in Scripture, or without any Foundation in it.

The great Objection to this Doctrine is, that this *episcopal Order of the Clergy* is only an apostolical Practice; and seeing *all* apostolical Practices are not binding to us, surely this need not.

In Answer to this, my Lord, I shall first shew, that though all apostolical Practices are not necessary, yet some may be necessary. *Secondly*, That the divine unalterable Right of Episcopacy is not founded *merely* on apostolical Practice.

To begin with the *first*; The Objection runs thus, *All apostolical Practices are not unalterable or obligatory to us, therefore no apostolical Practices are.* This, my Lord, is just as theological, as if I should say all Scripture-Truths are not Articles of Faith, or Fundamentals of Religion, therefore no Scripture-Truths are: Is not the Argument full as just and solid in one Case as the other? May there not be the same Difference between some Practices of the Apostles and others, that there is betwixt some Scripture Truths and others? Are all Truths equally important that are to be found in the Bible? Why must all Practices be of the same Moment that were apostolical? Now if there be any Way, either divine or human, of knowing an Article of Faith, from the smallest Truth, or most indifferent Matter in Scripture, they will equally assist us in distinguishing what apostolical Practices are of perpetual Obligation, and what are not. But it is a strange Way of Reasoning, that some People are fallen into, who seem to know nothing of *Moderation*, but jump as constantly out of one Extream

ſtream into another, as if there was no ſuch Thing as a middle Way, or any ſuch Virtue as *Moderation*. Thus either the Church muſt have an *abſolute uncontroulable Authority*, or none at all; we muſt either hold *all* apoſtolical Practices neceſſary, or *none at all*.

Again, If no apoſtolical *Practices* can be unalterable, becauſe all are not, then no apoſtolical *Doctrines* are neceſſary to be taught in all Ages, becauſe all apoſtolical *Doctrines* are not; and we are no more obliged to teach the *Death*, *Satisfaction*, and *Reſurrection* of *Jeſus Chriſt*, than we are obliged to forbid the *eating of Blood and Things ſtrangled*. If we muſt thus blindly follow them in all their Practices, or elſe be at Liberty to leave them in all, we muſt for the ſame Reaſon implicitly teach all their *Doctrines*, or elſe have a Power of receding from them all.

For if there be any Thing in the Nature of *Doctrines*, in the *Tenor* of Scripture, or the *Senſe* of Antiquity, whereby we can know the Difference of ſome *Doctrines* from others, that ſome were *occaſional temporary* Determinations, ſuited to particular States and Conditions in the Church, whilſt others were ſuch general *Doctrines* as would concern the Church in all States and Circumſtances; if there can be this Difference betwixt apoſtolical *Doctrines*, there muſt neceſſarily be the ſame Difference betwixt apoſtolical *Practices*, unleſs we will ſay, that their *Practices* were not ſuited to their *Doctrines*. For occaſional *Doctrines* muſt produce occaſional *Practices*.

Now may we not be obliged by ſome *Practices* of the Apoſtles, where the Nature of the Thing, and the Conſent of Antiquity, ſhews it to be equally neceſſary and important in all Ages and Conditions of the Church, without being tied down to the ſtrict Obſervance of every Thing which the Apoſtles did, though it plainly appears that it was done upon *accidental* and *mutable* Reaſons? Can we not be obliged to obſerve the *Lord's Day* from apoſtolical *Practice*, without

without being equally obliged to *lock the Doors* where we are met, becauſe in the Apoſtle's Time they locked them for Fear of their Enemies.

My Lord, we are to follow the *Practices* of the Apoſtles, as we ought to follow every Thing elſe, with *Diſcretion* and *Judgment*, and not run headlong into every Thing they did, becauſe they were Apoſtles, or yet think that becauſe we need not practiſe after them in every Thing, we need do it in nothing. We beſt imitate them, when we act upon ſuch Reaſons as they acted upon, and neither make their *occaſional* Practices *perpetual* Laws, nor break through ſuch general Rules as will always have the *ſame Reaſon* to be obſerved.

If it be aſked how we can know what Practices muſt be obſerved, and what may be laid aſide? I anſwer, as we know *Articles* of Faith from *leſſer Truths*; as we know *occaſional* Doctrines from *perpetual* Doctrines; that is, from the Nature of the Things, from the *Tenor* of Scripture, and the *Teſtimony* of Antiquity.

Secondly, It is not true, that the *divine unalterable Right* of Epiſcopacy is founded *merely* upon apoſtolical Practice.

We do not ſay that Epiſcopacy cannot be changed *merely* becauſe we have apoſtolical Practice for it, but becauſe ſuch is the Nature of the Chriſtian Prieſthood, that it can only be continued in that Method, which God has appointed for its Continuance. Thus Epiſcopacy is the *only* inſtituted Method of continuing the Prieſthood; therefore Epiſcopacy is *unchangeable*, not becauſe it is an apoſtolical Practice, but becauſe the Nature of the Thing requires it: A poſitive Inſtitution being only to be continued in that Method which God has appointed; ſo that it is the Nature of the Prieſthood, and not the apoſtolical Practice alone, that makes it neceſſary to be continued. The apoſtolical Practice indeed ſhews, that

Epiſ-

Epiſcopacy is the Order that is appointed, but it is the Nature of the Prieſthood that aſſures us that it is *unalterable:* And that becauſe an Office which is of no Significancy, but as it is of divine Appointment, and inſtituted by God, can no otherwiſe be continued, but in that Way of Continuance which God has appointed.

The Argument proceeds thus: The Chriſtian Prieſthood is a divine poſitive Inſtitution, which as it could only begin by the *divine Appointment*, ſo it can only deſcend to After-ages in ſuch a Method as God has been pleaſed to appoint.

The Apoſtles (and your Lordſhip owns, Chriſt was in *all* that they did*)inſtituted Epiſcopacy *alone*, therefore this Method of Epiſcopacy is unalterable, not becauſe an *apoſtolical Practice* cannot be laid aſide, but becauſe the Prieſthood can only deſcend to After-ages in ſuch a Method as is of divine Appointment.

So that the Queſtion is not fairly ſtated, when it is aſked whether Epiſcopacy, being an apoſtolical Practice, may be laid aſide? But it ſhould be aſked, whether an inſtituted particular Method of continuing the Prieſthood be not neceſſary to be continued? Whether an appointed Order of receiving a Commiſſion from God be not neceſſary to be obſerved, in order to receive a Commiſſion from him? If the Caſe was thus ſtated, as it ought, to be fairly ſtated, any one would ſoon perceive, that we can no more lay aſide Epiſcopacy, and yet continue the Chriſtian Prieſthood, than we can alter the Terms of Salvation, and be in Covenant with God.

I come now, my Lord, to the ſecond Objection, *That this uninterrupted Succeſſion is ſubject to ſo great Uncertainty, that if it be neceſſary, we can never ſay that we are in the Church.*

I know no Reaſon, my Lord, why it is ſo uncertain, but becauſe it is founded upon *hiſtorical Evidence.*

* *Anſwer to Dr.* Snape.

dence. Let it therefore be considered, my Lord, that Christianity itself is a *Matter of Fact* only conveyed to us by *historical Evidence:* That the *Canon of Scripture* is only made known to us by *historical Evidence*; that we have no other Way of knowing what Writings are the Word of God; and yet the Truth of our Faith, and every other Means of Grace depends upon our Knowledge and Belief of the Scriptures. Must we not declare the Necessity of the Succession of Bishops, because it can only be proved by *historical Evidence*, and that for such a long Tract of Time?

Why then do we declare the Belief of the Scriptures necessary to Salvation? Is not this equally putting the Salvation of Men upon a *Matter of Fact*, supported only by *historical Evidence*, and making it depend upon Things done seventeen hundred Years ago? Cannot *historical Evidence* satisfy us in one Point, as well as in the other? Is there any Thing in the Nature of this Succession, that it cannot be as well asserted by *historical Evidence*, as the Truth of the Scriptures? Is there not the same bare Possibility in the Thing itself, that the Scriptures may in some important Points be corrupted, as that this Succession may be broke? But is this any just Reason why we should believe, or fear, that the Scriptures are corrupted, because there is a physical Possibility of it, though there is all the Proof that can be required of the contrary? Why then must we set aside the Necessity of this Succession from a *bare Possibility* of Error, though there is all the Proof that can be required, that it never was broken, but strictly kept up?

And though your Lordship has told the World so much of the *Improbability*, *Nonsense*, and *Absurdity* of this Succession, yet I promise your Lordship an Answer, whenever you shall think fit to show, *when*, or *how*, or *where*, this Succession broke, or *seemed* to break, or was *likely* to break.

And

And till then, I ſhall content myſelf with offering this Reaſon to your Lordſhip, why it is *morally impoſſible* it ever ſhould have broken in all the Term of Years, from the Apoſtles to the preſent Times.

The Reaſon is this; it has been a received Doctrine in every Age of the Church, that no Ordination was valid but that of Biſhops: This Doctrine, my Lord, has been a conſtant Guard upon the *epiſcopal Succeſſion*; for ſeeing it was univerſally believed that Biſhops *alone* could ordain, it was *morally impoſsible* that any Perſons could be received as Biſhops, who had not been ſo ordained.

Now is it not *morally impoſsible* that in our Church any one ſhould be made a Biſhop without *epiſcopal Ordination?* Is there any Poſſibility of forging Orders, or ſtealing a Biſhoprick by any other Stratagem? No, it is *morally impoſsible*, becauſe it is an acknowledged Doctrine amongſt us, that a Biſhop can only be ordained by Biſhops. Now as this Doctrine muſt neceſſarily prevent any one being a Biſhop without *epiſcopal Ordination* in our Age, ſo it muſt have the ſame Effect in every other Age as well as ours; and conſequently it is as reaſonable to believe that the Succeſſion of Biſhops was not broke in any Age ſince the Apoſtles, as that it was not broke in our own Kingdom within theſe forty Years. For the ſame Doctrine which preſerves it forty Years, may as well preſerve it forty hundred Years, if it was equally believed in all that Space of Time. That this has been the conſtant Doctrine of the Church, I preſume your Lordſhip will not deny; I have not here entered into the hiſtorical Defence of it; this, and indeed every other Inſtitution of the Chriſtian Church, has been lately ſo well defended from the eccleſiaſtical Records by a very excellent and judicious Writer. *

* *Original Draught of the Primitive Church.*

We believe the Scriptures are not corrupted, because it was always a received Doctrine in the Church, that they were the *ſtanding Rule of Faith*, and becauſe the Providence of God may well be ſuppoſed to preſerve ſuch Books as were to convey to every Age the Means of Salvation. The ſame Reaſons prove the great Improbability that this Succeſſion ſhould ever be broke, both becauſe it was always againſt a received Doctrine to break it, and becauſe we may juſtly hope the Providence of God would keep up his own Inſtitution.

I muſt here obſerve, that though your Lordſhip often expoſes the Impoſſibility of this Succeſſion, yet at other times, even you your ſelf, and your Advocates, aſſert it. Thus you tell us, *That the Papiſts have one regular Appointment or uninterrupted Succeſſion of Biſhops undefiled with the touch of Lay-hands.* *

Is this Succeſſion then ſuch an *improbable impoſſible* Thing, and yet can your Lordſhip aſſure us that it is at *Rome*; that though it be ſeventeen hundred Years old there, yet that it is a true one? Is it ſuch *Abſurdity*, and *Nonſenſe*, and every Thing that is *ridiculous*, when we lay Claim to it; and yet can your Lordſhip aſſure us that it is not only poſſible to be, but *actually* is in Being, in the Church of *Rome*; What Arguments or Authority can your Lordſhip produce, to ſhew that there is a Succeſſion there, that will not equally prove it to be here?

You aſſert expreſsly, that there is a *true Succeſſion* there; you deny that we have it here; therefore your Lordſhip muſt mean, that we have not epiſcopal Ordination when we ſeparated from the Church of *Rome*. And here the Controverſy muſt reſt betwixt you and your Adverſaries, *whether we had epiſcopal Ordination* then; for as your Lordſhip has expreſsly affirmed

* *Preſervative*, p 80.

affirmed that there is this uninterrupted Succeſſion in the Church of *Rome*, it is impoſſible that we ſhould want it, unleſs we had not epiſcopal Ordination at the *Reformation*.

Whenever your Lordſhip ſhall pleaſe to appear in Defence of the *Nag's-Head Story*, or any other Pretence againſt our epiſcopal Ordination when we departed from *Rome*, we ſhall beg Leave to ſhew our ſelves ſo far true Proteſtants, as to anſwer any *Popiſh* Argument your Lordſhip can produce.

Here let the *common Senſe* of the Laity be once more appealed to: Your Lordſhip tells them that an *uninterrupted Succeſſion* is improbable, abſurd, and *morally* ſpeaking, *impoſſible*, and, for this Reaſon, they need not trouble their Heads about it; yet in another Place you poſitively affirm, that this true *uninterrupted Succeſſion* is actually in the Church of *Rome:* That is, they are to deſpiſe this Succeſſion, becauſe it never was, or ever can be; yet are to believe that it *really* is in the *Romiſh* Church. My Lord, this comes very near *ſaying* and *unſaying*, *to the great Diverſion of the Papiſts.* Muſt they not laugh at your Lordſhip's *Proteſtant Zeal*, which might be much better called the *Spirit* of Popery? Muſt they not be highly pleaſed with all your Banter and Ridicule upon an *uninterrupted Succeſſion*, when they ſee you ſo kindly accept theirs: And think it only *Nonſenſe* and *Abſurdity* when claimed by any other Church? Surely, my Lord, they muſt conceive great Hopes of your Lordſhip, ſince you have here rather choſe to contradict your ſelf, than not vouch for their Succeſſion: For you have ſaid it is *morally impoſſible*, yet affirm that it is with them.

The third Objection againſt this *uninterrupted Succeſſion* is this, that it is a *Popiſh Doctrine*, and *gives* Papiſts *Advantage over us.*

The Objection proceeds thus, We muſt not aſſert the Neceſſity of this Succeſſion, becauſe the *Papiſts* ſay

ſay it is only to be found with them. I might add, becauſe ſome mighty zealous *Proteſtants* ſay ſo too.

But if this be good Argumentation, we ought not to tell the *Jews*, or *Deiſts*, &c. that there is any Neceſſity of embracing Chriſtianity, becauſe the *Papiſts* ſay Chriſtians can only be ſaved in their Church.

Again, we ought not to inſiſt upon a true Faith, becauſe the *Papiſts* ſay that a true Faith is only in their Communion. So that there is juſt as much Popery in teaching this Doctrine, as in aſſerting the Neceſſity of Chriſtianity to a *Jew*, or the Neceſſity of a right Faith to a *Socinian*, &c.

I ſhall only trouble your Lordſhip with a Word or two concerning another Point in my former Letter. I there proved that your Lordſhip has put the whole of our Title to God's Favour upon Sincerity, *as ſuch*, independent of every Thing elſe. That no Purity of Worſhip, no Excellence of Order, no Truth of Faith, no Sort of Sacraments, no Kind of Inſtitutions, or any Church, *as ſuch*, can help us to the leaſt Degree of God's Favour, or give us the ſmalleſt Advantage above any other Communion. And conſequently, that your Lordſhip has ſet ſincere *Jews*, *Quakers*, *Socinians*, *Muggletonians*, and all *Heretics* and *Schiſmatics*, upon the ſame Bottom, as to the Favour of God, with ſincere Chriſtians.

Upon this, my Lord, I am called upon to prove that theſe ſeveral Sorts of People can be *ſincere* in your Account of Sincerity. To which, my Lord, I make this Anſwer, Either there are ſome ſincere Perſons among *Jews*, *Quakers*, *Socinians*, or any kind of *Heretics* and *Schiſmatics*, or there are not; if there are, your Lordſhip has given them the ſame Title to God's Favour, that you have to the ſincereſt Chriſtians; if you will ſay there are no ſincere Perſons amongſt any of them, then your Lordſhip

ſhip damns them all in the Groſs; for ſurely Corruptions in Religion, profeſſed with Inſincerity, will never ſave People.

I have nothing to do to prove the Sincerity of any of them; if they are ſincere, what I have ſaid is true; if you will not allow them to be ſincere, you condemn them all at once.

Again, I humbly ſuppoſed a Man might be ſincere in his *religious Opinions*, though it might be owing to *ſome ill Habits*, or *ſomething criminal* in himſelf, that he was fallen into ſuch or ſuch a Way of thinking. But it ſeems this is all *Contradiction*; and no Man can be ſincere, who has *any Faults*, or whoſe *Faults* have any *Influence* upon his Way of thinking.

Your Lordſhip tells all the *Diſſenters*, that they may be eaſy if they are ſincere; and that it is the only Ground for Peace and Satisfaction. But pray, my Lord, if none are to be eſteemed *ſincere*, but thoſe who have no Faults, or whoſe Faults have no Influence upon their Perſuaſions, who can be aſſured that he is *ſincere*, but he that has the leaſt Pretence to it, the *proud Phariſee?* If your Lordſhip, or your Advocates, were deſired to prove your Sincerity, either before God or Man, it muſt be for theſe Reaſons, becauſe you have no ill Paſſions or Habits, no faulty Prejudices, no paſt or preſent Vices, that can have any Effect upon your Minds. My Lord, as this is the only Proof that any of you could give of your own Sincerity, in this Meaning of it, ſo the very Pretence to it, would prove the Want of it.

F I N I S.

A

REPLY

TO THE

Biſhop of *BANGOR*'s

ANSWER

TO THE

REPRESENTATION

OF THE

COMMITTEE

OF

CONVOCATION.

Humbly addreſſed to his Lordſhip.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M. A.

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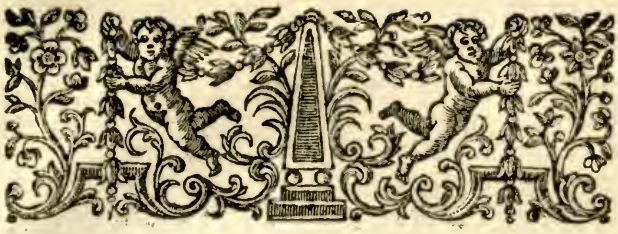

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My

CONTENTS.

My Lord,

I Beg leave to trouble your Lordſhip and the World once more with my Remarks upon the Doctrines you have lately delivered. Your *Sermon* and *Preſervative* I have already conſidered in the moſt impartial manner I could; and ſhall now examine your Anſwer to the *Repreſentation* of the Learned *Committee*, both as it is an Anſwer to that, and as it contains Opinions contrary to the fundamental Articles of Chriſtianity.

I have leſs need of excuſing to your Lordſhip this third Addreſs, ſince you can ſo eaſily acquit your ſelf from the Trouble of making any Reply to whatever comes from me. It ſeems I have too ſmall a Reputation to deſerve your Notice; but if the *Dean of* Chicheſter *would but declare for the Doctrines*

delivered in my Letters, and put but a little of his Reputation upon the iſſue, then, you ſay, *you would ſubmit to the Employment* of an Anſwer †.

My Lord, I readily confeſs that I have neither *Reputation* nor *Learning*, nor any *Title* to recommend me to your Lordſhip's Notice; but I muſt own, that I thought the very *want of theſe* would, in your Opinion, qualify me to make better Enquiries into Religious Truths, and raiſe your Eſteem of me as a Correſpondent in theſe Matters. For you expreſsly declare, that *if* Learning *or* Literature *is to be intereſted in this Debate, then the moſt learned Man has certainly a Title to be the Univerſal Judge* *. So that no Man ought to ſhew any Regard to *Learning*, as a *Qualification* in religious Diſputes, unleſs he will own that the moſt learned Man has a Title to be a Pope, or as you expreſs it, the *Univerſal Judge*. Yet your Lordſhip, in ſpight of this Proteſtant Doctrine ſo lately delivered, has deſpiſed and overlooked all my Opinions in Religion merely for my want of *Character* and *Learning*, and has promiſed to undertake the *needleſs* Taſk of examining thoſe Opinions with another Gentleman, merely upon account of his *Character* and *Reputation*. So that though it is perfect Popery, and making the moſt learned Man the uni-

† *Anſw. to Condit. of our Saviour vindicated*, p. 112.
* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 99.

verſal

verſal Judge, to allow any thing to Learning; yet your Lordſhip is ſo *true a Proteſtant*, and pays ſo great a Regard to Learning, that you will not ſo much as examine a Doctrine with a Perſon of no Character for Learning.

Again you ſay; *Nothing has been ſeen to adminiſter ſo many Doubts and Differences* (in Religion) *as Learning* *, and that *none are ſeen to be leſs ſecure from Error than learned Men.*

Now is it not ſtrange, my Lord, that after this noble Declaration againſt *Learning*, as the greateſt Cauſe of Doubts and Differences, this extraordinary Preference given to *Ignorance*, as a more likely Guide to Truth, you ſhould deſpiſe any one as below your Notice in religious Diſputes, becauſe he wants *that* Learning which ſo blinds the Underſtanding? Can you aſcribe thus much Honour to Learning, which in your Opinion does ſo much Diſhonour to Religion? Will you *intereſt* thoſe Qualities in this Debate, which if they are allowed to have any *Intereſt* in it, will make the Man of the greateſt Abilities the *Univerſal Judge.*

Again, As a farther Reaſon why you have taken no notice of me, you ſay, as *conſiderable a Writer as Mr.* Law *is, I hope the Committee*, as a Body, *are much more conſiderable in the Dean's Eyes; I am ſure,*

* *Ibid.* p. 98.

they are in mine: And the Dean himself, I have thought a much more considerable Writer than Mr. Law, *and so have* spent all my time upon *Him* and the *Committee.*

Now, my Lord, though I readily acknowledge this to be exceeding true, and have so far at least a just Opinion of my self, as to be afraid to be compared to much less Persons than the Dean, or any of the learned Committee, yet, my Lord, this Reason, which, if urged by any one else, might pass for a good one, cannot be urged by you, without contradicting a principal Doctrine maintained in your *Answer to the Representation.* For there you bid us *look into the Popish Countries; and see whether* one illiterate honest *Man be not as capable of judging for himself in Religion, as all their* learned *Men united; even supposing them met together in a* General Council, *with all possible Marks of Solemnity and Grandeur* *.

Here we see a Person merely for his want of *Literature* made as good a Judge in Religion, as a *General Council* of the most learned Men, acting with the utmost Solemnity. We see a Council in its utmost Perfection contemptuously compared to, and even made less considerable than a private illiterate Person. And this we may fairly suppose was intended to shew your Contempt of

* *Answ. to Repr.* p. 98.

the

the *Engliſh Convocation*. But a few Weeks after, when you had another Deſign in your Head, you tell us to this purpoſe, that you diſregarded the Writings of a ſingle Perſon of no Figure in the learned World, to pay your Reſpect to the Committee as a *Body*, *which, as ſuch, is much more conſiderable in your Eyes*. So that here an *illiterate* Perſon is made a great Judge in Religion in regard to a Body of learned Men, becauſe he is illiterate; and here that ſame Perſon is made of no Conſideration in Points of Religion in regard to a *Body* of learned Men, merely becauſe he is *private and illiterate*.

It will be of no Advantage to your Lordſhip, to ſay that you have only replied to the *Dean*, in relation to me; in the *ſame* Words that he uſed to you, in relation to Mr. *Sykes*.

For, my Lord, that Reply might be proper enough from the Dean, if he judged right of Mr. *Sykes*'s Performance; it being very reaſonable to overlook an Adverſary that has neither Truth, Abilities, or Reputation to ſupport his Cauſe.

But though this might be right in the Dean, who pays a true Regard to the Authority and Learning of great Men, yet it cannot be defended by your Lordſhip. For though my *Learning* or *Reputation* were ever ſo low, they are ſo far from unqualifying me for religious Enquiries, that if you would ſincerely ſtand to

what you have ſaid, you ought, for the want of theſe very Accompliſhments, to eſteem me the more, and even chuſe me out as a Correſpondent in this Debate.

But however, without any farther Regard to the Opinion your Lordſhip has either of me or my Abilities, I ſhall proceed to the moſt impartial Examination of your Book that I poſſibly can.

Of the Nature of the Church.

TO begin with your Lordſhip's Deſcription of a Church; *The Number of Men, whether ſmall or great, whether diſperſed or united, who truly and ſincerely are Subjects to Chriſt alone in Matters of Salvation* *.

The learned Committee calls this your Lordſhip's Deſcription of a Church.

Your Lordſhip anſwers; *I wonder to hear this called my Deſcription of* A Church; *whereas I pretend, in thoſe Words to deſcribe no other, but* The Univerſal Inviſible Church. *It is a Deſcription, not of* A Church, *in our modern way of ſpeaking; but of* The Church, the Inviſible Church of Chriſt †.

---

* *Serm.* p. 17. † *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 70.

May

May not we alſo wonder, my Lord, that you ſhould ſo deſcribe *The* Church, that it will not bear being call'd *A* Church? If I ſhould ſay it is a Deſcription of no Church, I have your Lordſhip's Confeſſion, that it is not *A* Church; ſo that it is ſomething betwixt *a Church* and no Church, that is, it is *The Church*.

Suppoſe, my Lord, ſome body or other ſhould have a mind to be of your Church, if he betakes himſelf to *A Church*, he is wrong; you do not mean *A Church*, but *The Church*. Your Lordſhip owns that this is not a Deſcription of a Church in the modern way of ſpeaking; I humbly preſume to call upon your Lordſhip to ſhew that it is a Deſcription according to the ancient way of ſpeaking. To call the Number of Believers the Inviſible Church, is a way of ſpeaking, no more to be found in the Scriptures, than the Company of *Præ-Adamites*.

There is, no doubt of it, an Inviſible Church, *i. e.* a Number of Beings that are in Covenant with God, who are not to be ſeen by human Eyes; and we may be ſaid to be Members of this *Inviſible Church*, as we are intitled to the ſame Hopes and Expectations. But to call the Number of Men and Women who believe in Chriſt and obſerve his Inſtitutions, whether diſperſed or united in this viſible World, to call theſe *The Inviſible Church*, is as falſe and groundleſs, as to call

them the Order of *Angels*, or the Church of *Seraphims*. The Profeſſion of Chriſtians is as viſible as any other Profeſſion, and as much declared by viſible external Acts. And it is as proper to call a Number of Men practiſing *Law* or *Phyſick*, an Inviſible Society of *Lawyers* and *Phyſicians*, as to call the Church on Earth the *Inviſible* Church. For all thoſe Acts and Offices which prove People to be Chriſtians, or the Church of Chriſt, are as viſible and notorious, as thoſe which prove them to be of any particular ſecular Employment. Would it be proper to call the Number of *Infidels* and *Idolaters* the Inviſible Church of the Devil? Are they not viſibly under the Dominion of the Powers of Darkneſs? Are they not viſibly out of Chriſt's Church? Muſt it not therefore be as viſible who is in this Church, as who is not in it?

If any one ſhould tell us that we are to believe *Inviſible* Scriptures, and obſerve *Inviſible* Sacraments, he would have juſt as much Reaſon and Scripture of his ſide, as your Lordſhip has for this Doctrine. And it would be of the ſame Service to the World to talk of theſe *Inviſibilities*, if the *Canon* of Scripture was in diſpute, as to deſcribe this *Inviſible* Church, when the Caſe is, with what *Viſible* Church we ought to unite.

Our Saviour himſelf tells us, that *the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a Net that was caſt into the Sea, and gathered of every kind;*

kind; which, when it was full, they drew to ſhore and ſat down, and gathered the good into Veſſels, but caſt the bad away. And then ſays, *ſo ſhall it be at the end of the World*.*

This, my Lord, is a Deſcription of the State of Chriſt's Church given us by himſelf. Is there any thing in this Deſcription that ſhould lead us to take it for an *Inviſible* Kingdom, that conſiſts of one particular ſort of People *inviſibly* united to Chriſt? Nay, is it not the whole Intent of this Similitude to teach us the contrary, that his Kingdom is to conſiſt of a Mixture of good and bad Subjects till the End of the World? The Kingdom of Chriſt is ſaid here to gather its Members, as a Net gathers *all kinds* of Fiſh; it is chiefly compared to it in this reſpect, becauſe it gathers of *all kinds*; which I ſuppoſe is a ſufficient Declaration, that this Kingdom conſiſts of Subjects good and bad, as that the Net that gathers of every kind of Fiſh, takes good and bad Fiſh. Let us ſuppoſe that the Church of Chriſt was this *Inviſible Number* of People united to Chriſt by ſuch internal inviſible Graces; is it poſſible that a Kingdom conſiſting of this one particular ſort of People *inviſibly good*, ſhould be like a Net that gathers of *every kind* of Fiſh? If it was to be compared to a Net, it

* *Matth.* 13. 47.

ought

ought to be compared to such a Net, as gathers only of one kind, *viz.* good Fish and then it might represent to us a Church that has but one sort of Members.

But since Christ who certainly understood the Nature of his own Kingdom, has declared that it is like a Net that gathers *of every kind of Fish*; it is as absurd to say, that it consists only of *one kind* of Persons (*viz.* the invisibly good) as to say, that the Net which gathers of *every kind*, has only of *one kind* in it. Farther; *when it was full they drew it to shore, and gathered the good into Vessels, but cast the bad away*; *so shall it be at the end of the World.* Now as it was the bad as well the good Fish which filled the *Net*, and the Church is compared to the *Net* in this respect; so it is evident that bad Men as well as good are Subjects of this Kingdom. And I presume they are Members of that Kingdom which they fill up, as surely as the the Fish must be in the *Net* before they can fill it. All these Circumstances plainly declare that the Church or Kingdom of Christ shall consist of a Mixture of good and bad People to the End of the World.

Again; Christ declares *that the Kingdom of Heaven is like to a certain King which made a marriage for his Son*, and sent his Servants out into the High-ways, who *gathered together all as many as they found; both*

both good and bad, and the Wedding was filled with Guests *.

Nothing can be more evident than that the chief Intent of this Parable is to shew that the Church of Christ is to be a Mixture of good and bad People to the end of the World. It is like a *Feast* where good and bad Guests are entertained; but can it be like such a *Feast* if only the *invisibly* virtuous are Members of it? If the Subjects of this Kingdom are of one *invisible kind*, how can they bear any Resemblance to a *Feast* made up of *all kinds* of Guests? Nay, what could be thought of, more unlike to this Kingdom, if it was such a Kingdom as you have represented it?

How could our blessed Saviour have more directly guarded against such a Description of his Kingdom as your Lordship has given us, than he has done in these Parables? He compares it to a Quantity of good and bad Fish in a *Net*, to a Number of good and bad Guests at a *Feast*. Are there any Words that could more fully declare his Meaning to be, that his Kingdom consisted of good and bad Subjects? Could any one more directly contradict this Account of our Saviour, than by saying that his Kingdom is an invisible Kingdom consisting of a particular sort of People invisibly virtuous?

* *Matth.* 22. 2.

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Your Lordſhip profeſſes a mighty Regard for the Scriptures, and a great Diſlike to all Doctrines that are not delivered there; pray, my Lord, produce but ſo much as *one Text* of Scripture; tell us the *Apoſtle* or *Evangeliſt* that ever declared the *Number of Believers whether diſperſed or united on Earth, to be the Univerſal Inviſible Church*; ſhew us any one Paſſage in Scripture which teaches us, that none are of the Church of Chriſt, but thoſe who have ſuch *Inviſible Virtues*, and cannot be known to be ſo.

There is as much Authority from Scripture to prove that the Church is a Kingdom without any Subjects, as that they are only of it, who have ſuch Inviſible Graces. And it is as eaſy to prove from thoſe ſacred Writings, that neither Chriſt or his Apoſtles were ever *Viſible* on Earth, as that the Number of People on Earth who believe in Chriſt conſtitute the *Inviſible Church*.

In the Parables above mentioned it is out of all doubt that our Saviour deſcribes his *Univerſal Kingdom* or *Church*: It is alſo certain that the *Univerſal* Inviſible Church, which you call Chriſt's Church, cannot be this *Univerſal Church* that is made up of a Mixture of good and bad Members. I therefore beg of your Lordſhip to let us know where Chriſt has taught us, that he has two *Univerſal Churches* on Earth; for if you cannot ſhew that he has declared that he has

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theſe two Univerſal Churches, you muſt allow that this which you have deſcribed, is a Church of your own ſetting up, not only without any Authority, but even againſt the expreſs Word of Scripture.

Your Lordſhip ſays that the Doctrines which the Learned Committee have condemned, if they be of that evil Tendency, muſt be ſo *either with Regard to the* Univerſal Inviſible Church, *made up of all thoſe who ſincerely in their Hearts believe in Chriſt; or with reſpect to the* Univerſal Viſible Church *made up of all, who in all Countries (whether ſincerely or inſincerely) openly profeſs to believe in Chriſt; or with reſpect to* ſome particular Viſible Church *.

It may be juſtly expected, my Lord, that you ſhould ſhew us ſome Grounds for this Diſtinction. Where does our bleſſed Lord give us ſo much as the leaſt Hint that he has founded two Univerſal Churches on Earth? Did he deſcribe his Church by halves when he likened it to a *Net* full of all kinds of Fiſh? Has he any where let us know that he has another Univerſal Kingdom on Earth beſides this, which in the Variety of its Member is like a *Net* full of all ſorts of good and bad Fiſh.

Let your Lordſhip, if you can, ſhew any Subtilties in *Popery* which are more of human Inven-

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 5.

tion,

tion, or more contrary to Scripture than this refined Distinction. The *Opus Operatum* in the Sacraments, the *temporal* Satisfactions for Sins, Works of *Superogation*, or any of the nicest Arts of *Jesuitism*, are not less founded in Scripture than this nice Distinction, of injuring either the *Universal Invisible*, or the *Universal Visible*, or a *particular Visible Church*. For, my Lord, the Church of Christ is as truly one and the same Church, as the Sacrament of Baptism is one and the same Baptism; and he no more instituted several sorts of Churches, than he instituted several kinds of Baptism.

Pray, my Lord, therefore be no longer angry at *Human Arts* in Religion; why may not *Popery* have its Peculiarities in Doctrine as well as your Lordship; the Church of *Rome*, with all its Additions and Corruptions, and pompous Ornaments, is as much like the Church as it was in the *Apostles* Times, as your *Invisible Church* is like that which Christ declared to be his Church. When they set out the Church as *Infallible*, they do but *reason* like your Lordship, when you describe it as *Invisible*.

That there are good and bad Church-men, is past all doubt; but that People are of the Church by means of *invisible Virtues*, is as false, as that only good Men came to the Feast in the Gospel We are assured that *many are called, but few are chosen*; *i. e.* that many shall

ſhall be made Members of Chriſt's Church, but few ſhall be ſaved; and who theſe few are that truly work out their Salvation, may be *inviſible* to us; but thoſe many that were called, that is, who were in the Church, though they did not live up to all the Intents of Church-Communion, yet were as truly of the Church, as the bad Fiſh were really in the Net.

But to preceed; I ſhall illuſtrate this Reply of your Lordſhip concerning an *Univerſal Viſible, and Univerſal Inviſible, and particular Viſible Church*, with the following Inſtances.

Let us ſuppoſe any one was charged with writing againſt the *Sacraments*; if he ſhould with your Lordſhip reply, that this Charge againſt him muſt either relate to the *Univerſal Viſible Sacraments*, or *Univerſal Inviſible Sacraments*, or *particular Viſible Sacraments*, he would have juſt as much *Scripture* or *Reaſon* to ſupport that Diſtinction, as your Lordſhip has for dividing the Church into *Univerſal Viſible*, and *Univerſal Inviſible*, and *particular Viſible*. For the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, or Church-Memberſhip, is as external and viſible a thing, as the Sacraments are external viſible Inſtitutions. So that it is as contrary to Scripture, and as mere an human Invention to make Pretence of an *Univerſal Inviſible Church*, when the Diſpute is concerning Chriſt's Church on Earth, as it

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is to have recourſe to *Inviſible Sacraments*, if the Queſtion was concerning *Chriſt's Sacraments*.

They are both equally external and viſible; and as the Sacraments may be received without any ſpiritual Advantage, ſo Perſons may be of the Church and yet not be ſaved. And as the Sacraments are not leſs Sacraments, though they may not convey the deſigned Benefits to the Receiver; ſo neither are ſuch a Number of People not of the Church, though they do not obtain that Salvation which is the intended Conſequence of Church-Communion.

Your Lordſhip cannot give any one Reaſon for introducing this Diſtinction with Regard to the Church, which will not equally hold for the ſame Diſtinction in Regard to the Sacraments; and there is exactly the ſame *Quakery* and *Fanaticiſm* in one Doctrine as the other.

For as they are the *Sacraments* which chiefly conſtitute the *Church*, ſo no *Diſtinctions* or *Diviſions* can with any tolerable Propriety be applied to the Church, but ſuch as may be alſo applied to the *Sacraments*, that conſtitute the *Church*. And therefore the Terms *Univerſal* and *Particular*, *Viſible* and *Inviſible*, have no more to do with Chriſt's Church which he has inſtituted in *this World*, than with the two Sacraments which he alſo inſtituted, *Baptiſm*, and the *Supper* of the Lord.

Again,

Again, If any one was accuſed of writing againſt the *Chriſtian Revelation*, he might anſwer with your Lordſhip, if this Accuſation be true, it muſt be ſo either with regard to God's *Univerſal Viſible* Revelation in all the *Canonical* Books, or with Regard to his *Univerſal Inviſible Revelation* whereby he ſpeaks inwardly to all *ſincere* People, or with reſpect to ſome *particular* Part of his *viſible Revelation*. Let all the World judge, whether if a Perſon ſo accuſed ſhould make this Reply, it would not plainly appear, either that he was a downright *Enthuſiaſt*, or a crafty Dealer in *Cant* and *artificial* Words. I am ſure your Lordſhip cannot ſhew that you have more Authority to divide the Church on Earth into *Univerſal Viſible*, and *Univerſal Inviſible*, and *particular Viſible*, then he had to divide the Chriſtian *Revelation* into *Viſible* and *Inviſible*. Neither was it leſs to the purpoſe for ſuch a one to talk of *Inviſible* Scriptures, if he was accuſed of denying the *Goſpel* of St. *John*, than it is for your Lordſhip under your preſent Accuſation to have recourſe to the *Inviſible* Church; but your Lordſhip will find no Advantage in this Retreat.

Again; Suppoſe a Perſon was charged with writing *Treaſon* againſt the Government, and in his Defence ſhould thus diſtinguiſh; *The Treaſon* that I am charged with againſt the Government, muſt relate either to *Univerſal*

Government in this World, or to *Univerſal* Government in the *other World*, or to ſome *particular* Government in this World.

It would be as *ingenuous*, as *ſincere*, and as *pertinent* for a Perſon thus accuſed to talk of Governments that had no relation to the Caſe, but in his own Imagination, as for your Lordſhip in the preſent Diſpute to talk of *Univerſal Viſible*, and *Univerſal Inviſible*, and *particular Viſible* Churches. For beſides this, that there is no Foundation for ſuch a Diſtinction, yet if there was ſuch an Inviſible Church, how is it poſſible your Lordſhip ſhould hurt it? How is it poſſible the *Learned Committee* ſhould mean to charge you with injuring it? They might as well think your Lordſhip capable of forming a Deſign to arreſt a Party of *Spirits*, as to attack an Inviſible Church that neither you nor they know any thing of, or where to find.

Your Lordſhip ſaith, *That if you have unjuſtly laid any thing down in this Deſcription of the Inviſible Church, to the Prejudice or Injury of any Particular Viſible Church*, you acknowledge *that it is your part to anſwer for it* *.

I believe it appears already that your Lordſhip has a great deal to anſwer for upon this Head; and I ſhall now farther ſhew, that you have ſet up this *Inviſible Church* in Oppoſi-

* *Anſw. to Rep.* p. 70.

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tion to *all other* Churches *whatever*. This will appear from the following Paſſage in your Sermon; *This Inquiry will bring us back to the firſt, which is the only true Account of the Church of Chriſt or Kingdom of Chriſt in the Mouth of a Chriſtian*, viz. *the Number of Men whether ſmall or great* *, &c.

We have your Lordſhip's Confeſſion that you only here pretend to deſcribe the *Univerſal Inviſible* Church of Chriſt; you alſo here plainly declare, that *it is the only true Account of Chriſt's Church or Kingdom in the Mouth of a Chriſtian.*

Is not this my Lord, expreſſly declaring, that *any other* Account of Chriſt's Church is not a true one; for you ſay this is the *only true* one? Is it not directly affirming that any other Deſcription of Chriſt's Church cannot become the Mouth of a Chriſtian; for you ſay that this is the *only true one in the Mouth of a Chriſtian?*. So that if we call the Univerſal Viſible Church, the Church of Chriſt, we give a falſe Account of Chriſt's Church, and ſuch a one as is unfit for the Mouth of a Chriſtian.

Could your Lordſhip have thought of any thing more ſhocking, than to ſay that the Deſcription of your *Inviſible Church is the only true Account* of Chriſt's Church, and fit for the Mouth of a Chriſtian, when our Saviour

* P. 16.

has given us a quite contrary Account of it from his own Mouth? He compares it to a *Net* full of good and bad Fiſh, to a *Feaſt* full of good and bad Gueſts; this ſurely, my Lord, is not an Account of your *Inviſible* Church, where there are only Inviſible Members. Your Lordſhip cannot ſay that Chriſt has here deſcribed the *Inviſible Church*; you directly ſay that your Deſcription of the Inviſible Church, is the only true Account of Chriſt's Church in the Mouth of a Chriſtian; and conſequently this Account which our Saviour himſelf has given of his Church, ſtands condemned by your Lordſhip as a falſe Account of Chriſt's Church unfit for the Mouth of a Chriſtian. I appeal to the common Senſe of every Reader, whether I have laid any thing to your Charge, but what your own expreſs Words amount to. The ſhort is this; If Chriſt has in theſe Parables deſcribed the *Univerſal Church* as Viſible, then it is plain that this Account of Chriſt's Church is a falſe one in the Mouth of a Chriſtian; for you ſay your Account of the Inviſible Church is *the only true Account of Chriſt's Church in the Mouth of a Chriſtian*; ſo that nothing can ſecure this Account which our Saviour has given of his Church from your Lordſhip's Cenſure, but ſhewing that it is the very *ſame Account of the Inviſible Church* that you have given; which I believe is more than your Lordſhip will undertake to prove; it being

being as hard to prove that a Net full of good and bad Fiſh, or a Feaſt full of good and bad Gueſts, ſhould repreſent an Inviſible Kingdom of only one ſort of Subjects, as that the Net and Feaſt, though both *full*, ſhould repreſent a Kingdom that had not *one* Subject in it.

If a *Fanatick* ſhould deſcribe the Chriſtian Sacraments, as *Spiritual* and *Inviſible* Sacraments, and then affirm that that was the *only true Account of Chriſtian* Sacraments *in the Mouth of a Chriſtian*, could we charge him with leſs than writing againſt *all* Sacraments but *Inviſible* Sacraments? It is juſt thus far that your Lordſhip has proceeded againſt the *External Viſible* Church; you have declared the Inviſible one to be the *only true Church*, fit to be ſpoke of by a Chriſtian, which I think is laying down a Poſition highly injurious to the Viſible Church, ſince it is here condemned as falſe in the Mouth of a Chriſtian.

From all this it appears, that the *Learned Committee* have juſtly diſliked your Lordſhip's Deſcription of the Church of Chriſt.

Firſt; As you deſcribe it as an Inviſible Church, directly contrary to the Scripture Repreſentations of it, as given by our Saviour himſelf.

Secondly; As it is in Diſparagement of the *Article* of our Church, which gives quite another Deſcription of the Church.

That the Church described in the *Article* falls under your Lordship's Censure, is very plain. For you declare that your Description of the Invisible, is the only true Account of Christ's Church; therefore the Description in the Article cannot be a true one, because it is different from yours, which is the only true one.

Secondly; You declare that you consider the Church under this Description, *viz.* as *Invisible*, because every other Notion of it, is made up of inconsistent Images *: Therefore the Account of the Church in the Article is thus inconsistent.

Now what does your Lordship answer here? Only this, *that the Article speaks of* the Visible Church, *and you speak of the Invisible one* †.

This Answer, my Lord, proves the Charge upon you to be just. For since you own that you describe another Church than that which is described in the *Article*, and expressly affirm that your Account of this other Church is the only *true Account of Christ's Church in the Mouth of a Christian*; you plainly declare that the other Church is a false one in the Mouth of a Christian. Yet your Lordship rests satisfied with this Reply, as if you had cleared your self by it. Whereas this is the very Charge itself, That you have de-

* *Serm.* p. 10. † *Answ. to Repr.* p. 78.

scribed

ſcribed the Church otherwiſe than it is in the Article, and have called this *different* and *new* Account of it, the *only true Account* of it; and if it be the only true one, then that which is given in the *Article* muſt be a falſe one.

Your Lordſhip goes on, *The Article declares what it is, that makes every ſuch Congregation, the* Viſible Church *of Chriſt; and I deſcribe what it is that makes every particular Man, a Member of Chriſt's* Univerſal Inviſible Church. *The Article deſcribes thoſe* outward Acts, *which are neceſſary to make a Viſible Church; and I deſcribe that* inward Sincerity, *and Regard to Chriſt himſelf, which make Men Members of the Inviſible Church of Chriſt. And where is the* Contradiction *contained in all this* *?

Suppoſe, my Lord, any one ſhould affirm that there is a *Sincere, Inviſible* Biſhop of *Bangor*, who is the *only true* Biſhop of *Bangor* in the *Mouth of a Chriſtian.* Would your Lordſhip think here was no Reflection intended upon your ſelf? Would you think this Account no *Contradiction* to your *Right* as Biſhop of *Bangor?* Does your Lordſhip believe ſuch an Aſſertion could come from any one that owned your Right to your *Biſhoprick*, and was a Friend to you in it? Would you imagine that nothing was meant againſt you, becauſe the other Biſhop was

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 79.

ſaid to be *Inviſible?* Your Lordſhip cannot but know, that though he is ſaid to be Inviſible, yet if he is the *only true Biſhop of* Bangor *in the Mouth of a Chriſtian*, then *any* other Biſhop of *Bangor*, whether *Viſible* or *Inviſible*, muſt be a *falſe one in the Mouth of a Chriſtian.*

Thus it is your Lordſhip has dealt with the *Viſible* Church; you have ſet another up as the *only true Church*, and yet think all is well: that there is no Contradiction, becauſe you call this other an *Inviſible Church*, whereas if it be the only true Church, it contradicts every other Church in the higheſt Senſe. And though it does not contradict it as a *Viſible* Church, yet it does as a *True* Church, which is of more Conſequence.

Your Lordſhip here puts a Queſtion in favour of the *Viſible* Church. *Can it be ſuppoſed by this learned Body, that a Man's being of the Inviſible Church of Chriſt, is inconſiſtent with his joining himſelf with any Viſible Church* ?*

No, my Lord, it cannot be ſuppoſed. It cannot be ſuppoſed by any Body that *a Man's being of the Inviſible Church*, is inconſiſtent with his joining himſelf to the *Royal Society*, or *College of Phyſicians.* But pray, my Lord, is this all that your Inviſible Church will allow of? Dare your Lordſhip proceed no farther, than only to grant that it is *no*

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 79.

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Inconſiſtency, no Contradiction for a Member of your *Inviſible* Church to join with any *Viſible* Church? If you would *ſincerely* ſhew that you have ſaid nothing to the Prejudice of the *Viſible* Church, you ought to declare that the Members of your *Inviſible* Church, may not only *conſiſtently* join with that which is Viſible, but that it is their *Duty*, and that they are *obliged* to join with it in order to be of yours that is *Inviſible*. For if you have ſet up an *Inviſible* Church, which will excuſe its Members from being of any that is Viſible, then you have plainly deſtroyed it, by making it uſeleſs. And it is but a poor Apology for it to ſay, there is no *Inconſiſtency* in joining with it, after you have made it needleſs and unneceſſary to join with it. And it will be pretty difficult to give a *conſiſtent* Reaſon, why any Perſon ſhould join himſelf to a needleſs Church.

Your Lordſhip has here made great Diſcoveries of the Nature of your *Inviſible* Church, which appears to have nothing *viſible* or *external* in it.

For firſt, you declare that the Article deſcribes one Church, and you another. But how does this appear? How does your Lordſhip prove this? 1ſt. *Becauſe the Article declares what it is that makes every ſuch Congregation the* Viſible *Church* *. Now, my

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 70.

Lord,

Lord, if this ſhews that the Article does not deſcribe your Church, then it is plain that the Article here deſcribes *ſomething* that does not belong to your Church; for if it *equally* belonged to your Church, it could be no *Proof* that it did not deſcribe your Church. But you expreſsly ſay that it deſcribes a different Church from yours; therefore it muſt deſcribe *ſomething* that does not belong to yours.

Now if that which makes any Congregation the Viſible Church, be not neceſſary to make Perſons Members of your Church, it follows that they may be Members of yours, without being of *any Viſible* Church.

Again; Another Reaſon why the Article does not deſcribe your Inviſible Church is this; Becauſe it deſcribes *thoſe outward Acts, which are neceſſary to make a Viſible Church.* Theſe outward Acts are, the *Preaching the pure Word of God, and adminiſtring the Sacraments.* Now, my Lord, ſeeing theſe *outward Acts* ſhew that the Church here deſcribed is not your *Inviſible Church*, does not this evidently declare that ſuch outward Acts are not neceſſary to your Church? For if they did equally belong to both Churches, and were alike neceſſary to them, how could they more deſcribe one than another? But you ſay, it is the mentioning of theſe *outward Acts*, that ſhews that your *Inviſible Church* is not deſcribed; therefore it is plain, that you do not include theſe *outward*

Acts

Acts as essential to your Invisible Church, and consequently it is a Church to which neither *public Worship*, nor *visible Sacraments are necessary*. For if these outward Acts are necessary to your *Invisible* Church, why does not your Lordship mention them as such? You own *you describe what it is that makes every particular Man a Member of the Invisible Church*; yet you not only take no notice *of these outward Acts*, but say that the Article describes not your Church, because it mentions *these outward Acts*, which is a *Demonstration*, that these *outward Acts do not belong to your Church*.

Farther; When the *Learned Committee* had charged your Lordship with the Omission of *preaching the Word and administring of the Sacraments*, you answer, *they might have added, He omits likewise the very publick Profession of Christianity. And is not the Reason plain? because I was not speaking of the* Visible *Church*; *to which* alone, *as such*, visible outward Signs, *and verbal Professions belong: but of the Universal* Invisible *Church* *.

My Lord, the Reason is very plain, and it is as plain that is not a good Reason. For if the *preaching* of the Word, the *administring* of the Sacraments, and the publick Profession of Christianity, be necessary to

* *Answ. to Repr.* p. 80.

make

make any one a Member of *your Invisible Church*, then there was as good Reason to mention them in your Description, as if you had been describing the Visible Church.

If they are not necessary, then you have set up a Church *exclusive* of the Visible Church. The Case stands thus; If these outward Acts be as necessary to make Persons be of the *Invisible* as of the *Visible Church*, then they ought to come equally into the Description of both Churches, being equally necessary to both: If you say they are not equally necessary, then you must allow that there is no Necessity that the Members of your Church should be in *any external* Communion.

It is therefore no Apology, to say that you describe the *Invisible* Church, unless you will say that a Man may be of it, without *any outward Acts*, or *Communion* with *any Visible* Church. If a Person may be of this *Invisible* Church without having any thing to do with Visible Sacraments, or Worship in a Visible Communion, then you have an Excuse, why you did not mention these *outward Professions* in your Description of the Church; but if he cannot be of this Invisible Communion without observing these *outward Ordinances*, then it was as necessary to mention these *outward Ordinances* in your Account of this Church, as if you had been describing a Church, which consisted of nothing else but outward Ordinances. So

So that the ſhort of the Caſe is this; If the Obſervation of external Ordinances be not neceſſary to make Men Members of your *Inviſible Church*, then indeed there is a plain Reaſon why your Lordſhip ſhould omit them; and it is alſo plain, that this Doctrine ſets aſide the Goſpel, if this *Inviſible Church*, the *only true Church in the Mouth of a Chriſtian*, be excuſed from *Goſpel* Ordinances. But if theſe external Ordinances be neceſſary to conſtitute the Inviſible Church, then there was as plain a Reaſon to mention them, in the Deſcription of your Church, as if you had been deſcribing the *Viſible Church*.

So that if your Lordſhip will give a good plain Reaſon why you have omitted theſe *outward Acts*, it muſt be becauſe they do not belong to it; for otherwiſe the calling it Inviſible is no Excuſe, unleſs it has no occaſion for ſuch *outward* Performances.

And indeed this has appeared to be your Doctrine in almoſt every Page, that you ſet up this *Inviſible* Church in Oppoſition to *Outward and Viſible* Ordinances. For you all along ſet out the Oppoſition or Difference betwixt the Viſible and Inviſible Church in reſpect to external Ordinances: Thus the one is Viſible, *becauſe to it alone belong external Signs, or verbal Profeſſions* *. The other is Inviſible for the *want* of *theſe*. Yet

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 81.

this

this Invisible Church thus destitute, and even necessarily destitute of external Ordinances, is by you called, the *only true Church in the Mouth of a Christian.*

One may, I acknowledge, easily conceive in one's Mind a Number of People, whose Internal and Invisible Graces may intitle them to the Favour of God; and these may be called an *Invisible Number*, or *Congregation*, or *Church*, because it is Invisible to us where it is, or how great it is. But then, my Lord, it is a great Mistake if this Invisible Church is opposed to, or distinguished from the *Visible Church* in respect of *external Ordinances*. For in these things they are both *equally* obliged to be Visible. And the Invisible Church is not so called, in *Contradistinction* to those who attend *Visible* Communions, and observe external Ordinances, but in *Contradistinction* to those who are *invisibly bad*; and are not what their external Profession promises. This is the only *Number* of People or *Church*, which the *Invisible* Church is opposed to. For as the Invisible Church intends a Number so called, because of their *Invisible* Graces; so this Invisibly good Church can be *truly* opposed only to the *Invisibly* bad Church, or such as are not such Persons *inwardly*, as they profess to be *outwardly*.

But, contrary to this, your Lordship has all along considered and described this *Invisible* Church in Opposition to the *Visible*, and made

made thoſe outward Acts which are *neceſſary* to the Viſible Church, ſo many *Marks* to diſtinguiſh it from that which is Inviſible. Thus you ſay, *that you was not ſpeaking of the Viſible Church, to which alone, as ſuch, viſible outward Signs, or verbal Profeſſions belong: but of the Univerſal Inviſible Church* *.

Here you plainly make *external Signs*, and *outward Profeſſions*, diſtinguiſh the Viſible from the Inviſible Church; whereas it is not *Inviſible* in this reſpect, as being *without* theſe *external* Profeſſions, or in *Contradiſtinction* to a *Viſible* Church; but it is only Inviſible in thoſe Graces, which human Eyes cannot perceive. Thus they are ſaid to be the Inviſible Church, becauſe they are a Number of Men, who are ſuch *inwardly*, as they profeſs to be *outwardly*. But this ſhews, that they cannot be ſo called in *Contradiſtinction* to *outward* Profeſſions, ſince they muſt have an *outward* Profeſſion themſelves before they can be inwardly *ſincere* in it; and conſequently they are not oppoſed to, or diſtinguiſhed from a Number of *outward Profeſſors*, for this they are obliged to be themſelves, but from a Number of outward Profeſſors, who are *not ſincere* in what they *outwardly* profeſs.

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* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 81.

If

If I ſhould deſcribe *charitable* Men to be an *Inviſible Church* of Perſons *ſincerely* well affected to Mankind, and this in Contradiſtinction to others who are *externally* charitable, and perform *outward* Acts of Love; or if I ſhould deſcribe *chaſte* Men to be an *Inviſible Church* of Perſons *inwardly chaſte* and pure, and this in Contradiſtinction to others *externally chaſte* and *viſibly* pure as to *outward Acts*; I ſhould juſt have the ſame Authority either from Reaſon or Scripture to ſet up theſe *Inviſible* Churches of *charitable* and *chaſte* Men, in Oppoſition to Perſons *outwardly* charitable and chaſte, as your Lordſhip has to ſet up this inviſible ſincere Church, in *Contradiſtinction* to the viſible external Church. For, firſt, this *Sincerity* no more makes a *Church*, than *Charity* and *Chaſtity* make a Church, or than *Honeſty* makes a Man a *Member* of a Corporation, or an *Officer* in the Army; theſe, being private perſonal Virtues, do not conſtitue a *Church* or *Society*, but concern Men, as Men, in every Eſtate of Life.

Secondly, *Outward* Ordinances and *Viſible* Profeſſions, are as neceſſary to make Men true Chriſtians, as *outward* Acts of Love and external Purity are neceſſary to make Men *charitable* or *chaſte*. For Chriſtianity as truly implies *external Acts* and *Profeſſions*, as Chaſtity implies *outward* Purity.

Now,

Now, my Lord, ſuppoſe the Queſtion was, whether *Adultery* or *Fornication* or any other Impurity was lawful, and that the World was divided upon this Controverſy; Would he not be an excellent Preacher of Chaſtity, that ſhould never tell us whether any or all of theſe were unlawful, but ſhould pretend to decide the Controverſy, by telling the World, that *chaſte* Men, are an *Inviſible* Church of Perſons *inwardly pure*, and this in *Contradiſtinction* to Perſons *externally* pure? Suppoſe he ſhould tell them, that their Title to Chaſtity did not depend upon their being or not being of the Number of any *outwardly* pure or impure Perſons, but upon their *inward* Purity; What Apology could even Charity itſelf make for ſuch a Teacher?

The Controverſy on foot is this; Whether external Communion with any ſort of Fanaticks be lawful? Whether it be as ſafe to be in one external viſible Communion as in another? The World is divided upon this Subject; and your Lordſhip comes in to end the Controverſy. But how? Is it by examining the Merits of the contending Parties? Is it by telling us what is right and what is wrong in the different Communions? Is it by telling us that one external Communion is better than another? Is it by ſhewing us that any is dangerous? Is it by directing us, with which we ought to join, or indeed that we ought ſo much as to join with any? No:

This right and wrong, or good and bad in *external* Communions, though it was the *whole Queſtion*, is wholly ſkipt over by your Lordſhip; and you preach up an *Inviſible Church* as the *only true Church in the Mouth of a Chriſtian*, and this in *Contradiſtinction* to all *Viſible* Churches: And only declare, that our Title to God's Favour cannot depend upon our being or continuing in any particular Method, but upon our *Sincerity*.

Your Lordſhip ſays; *I have laid down a Deſcription of the* Univerſal Inviſible Church *or Kingdom of Chriſt* *. Your Lordſhip had been as well employed if you had been painting of *Spirits*, or weighing of *Thoughts*. *The main Queſtion*, you ſay, *is whether this Deſcription be true and juſt* †.

This, my Lord, is not the *main Queſtion*; nor indeed does it concern us at all whether your Lordſhip is ingenious, or not, in this Deſcription.

For ſuppoſe your Lordſhip had been deſcribing an *Inviſible King* to the People of *Great Britain*, do you think the *main Queſtion* amongſt the *Lords* and *Commons* would be, whether you had hit off the Deſcription well? No, my Lord, the *main Queſtion* would be, To what Ends and Purpoſes you had ſet up ſuch a King, and what Relation the Subjects of *Great Britain* had to him;

* P. 78. † *Ibid.*

whether

whether they might leave their *Visible*, and pay only an *internal Allegiance* to your *Invisible King?* If your Lordship should farther describe him as the *only true King in the Mouth of a* Britain, I believe it would be thought but a *poor Apology* to appeal to your fine Painting, that you had described him *justly*, and set him out as *Invisible*. The Application is here very easy; it is a very trifling Question, and only concerns your Lordship's *Parts*, Whether your Description of your Invisible Church be just or not? But it is the Use and the End of setting up this Church, which is any Matter of Question to us. Your Lordship might erect as many Churches as you please, if you did it only for *speculative Amusement*, and to try your Abilities in fine Drawing; but if you pretend to unsettle the Christian Church, by your new Buildings, or to destroy the Distinction between the *Church* and *Conventicle*, by your *Invisibles*, we must beg your Lordship's Excuse, and can no more admire the *Beauty* or *Justness* of your fine Descriptions, than you would admire a *just Description* of an *Invisible Diocese*, if it was set out in order to receive your Lordship.

You add; But *of this* (Description) they *(the Committee)* have not said one word; *but rather chosen to* go off *to an article of the Church of* England, which defines not the *Universal Invisible Church*. And your

Lordſhip might as well obſerve, that they have not ſaid one word about *Plato*'s *Republick*. For how they ſhould imagine that you was deſcribing an *Inviſible* Church, or if they did, why they ſhould trouble their Heads with ſuch a Deſcription, is not eaſily conceived.

For, my Lord, if it was your primary Intention only to appear in Defence of an *Univerſal Inviſible Church*, what can we conceive in our Minds more ſurprizing? What can be more extraordinary, than that a Viſible Biſhop at a *Viſible* Court, ſhould with ſo much Solemnity preach in Defence of a Church which can neither be defended nor injured? Are there any Rights in your Inviſible Church which can poſſibly be loſt? If not, to what purpoſe does your Lordſhip come in as a Defender? Can the Sight of any Men find it, the Malice of any Men attack it, or the Good-will of any Men ſupport it? No: Yet though it is as inviſible as the *Center* of the Earth, and as much out of our reach as the *Stars*, yet your Lordſhip has very pathetically preached a Sermon, and publiſhed ſome Volumes, leſt this Inviſible Church, which no body knows where to find, ſhould be run away with.

Should the ſame Chriſtian Zeal induce your Lordſhip to appear, at ſome other ſolemn Occaſion, in the Cauſe of the *Winds*, your Pains would be as well employed; for it would be

as

as reaſonable to deſire that they might *riſe* and *blow* where they liſt, as that an Inviſible Church, no where to be known or found by us at preſent, may not be injured.

If therefore the *Learned Committee* had ſo far forgot that Viſible Church of which they are Members, as to have engaged with your Lordſhip about your *Inviſible Church*, the Diſpute would have been to as much purpoſe, as a *Tryal* in *Weſtminſter-Hall* about the *Philoſopher*'s *Stone*.

But you complain that they rather choſe to *go off* to an Article of the Church of *England*. My Lord, this is very hard indeed, that they ſhould *go off* to the Church of *England*, when you had an *Inviſible Church* ready for them; or that this Learned Body cannot diſpute about Churches, but they muſt needs bring the *Church of England* into the Queſtion.

Suppoſe, as in the above-mentioned Inſtance, your Lordſhip ſhould lay down a *fine* and *juſt* Deſcription of your *Inviſible* King of *Great Britain*, a Number of Tories ſhould, inſtead of examining the Truth of your Deſcription, *go off* to the *Act of Settlement*, which declares a *Viſible* King of *Britain*: This would be to uſe your Lordſhip juſt as the *Learned Committee* have done; who, inſtead of dwelling upon the Beauty and Juſtneſs of this Deſcription, have *gone off* to an old Article in the *Church of England*, which indeed only deſcribes an old-faſhioned *Viſible*

Church, as Churches went in the Apoſtles Days: That is, a *Congregation of faithful Men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments duly adminiſtred* *.

I am of Opinion, that the *Apoſtolical* Church would not have thought themſelves too *Inviſible* to be thus deſcribed, or that this was too *Viſible* a Deſcription of the Church of Chriſt to take in its *ſincere* Members.

Whether therefore your Lordſhip has given a true Deſcription of the *Inviſible* Church, that is, a Church of *Thoughts* and *Sentiments*, I ſhall not conſider, but thus much I muſt obſerve, that it is a very falſe Deſcription; firſt, as it pretends to deſcribe THE Church †, *and the only true Church in the Mouth of a Chriſtian.* For the Church of Chriſt, as has been ſhewn, is as truly a *Viſible external* Society, as any Civil or Secular Society in the World: And it is no more diſtinguiſhed from ſuch Societies by the *Inviſibility*, than by the *Youth* or *Age* of its Members.

The holy conſecrated *Elements* differ from common *Bread* and *Wine*, but they do not ſo differ from it, as to ceaſe to be as *Viſible*, as common Bread and Wine. Thus the Holy Catholick Church, the Kingdom of Chriſt,

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* *Artic.* 19. † *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 70.

differs

differs from worldly Societies and Kingdoms, but not in point of *Viſibility*, but in regard to the *Ends* and *Purpoſes* for which it is erected, *viz.* the eternal Salvation of Mankind.

Secondly, This Deſcription contradicts the nineteenth Article of the *Church of England*. For though it is not ſet up as another *Viſible* Church, ſo as to contradict it in point of *Viſibility*, yet ſeeing it is deſcribed as THE Church, and *the only true Church*, it plainly contradicts it in point of Truth; for if it be the only true Church, every other muſt be a falſe one.

Thirdly, This Deſcription is a mere *ſpeculative Conjecture*, a *Creature* of the Imagination, which can ſerve no Purpoſes, but is entirely foreign to the preſent Diſpute, and muſt be ſo to any Diſpute which ever can ariſe between contending Communions. It no more ſerves to inform any one, whether he ſhould go to the *Viſible* Church or *Viſible* Conventicle, than whether he ſhould ſtudy the *Law* or *Phyſick*. It may indeed ſerve to make Perſons regardleſs of any *Viſible Church*, but can be of no uſe to them, if they deſire to know with what *Viſible* Church they ought to join.

It may now be worth our while to obſerve, how your Lordſhip came by this Account of Chriſt's Kingdom, which you ſay is the *only true* one. *Jeſus anſwered, my Kingdom is*

not of this World, is the Text to your Sermon. You ſay, *you have choſen theſe Words in which our Lord declares the Nature of his Kingdom**.

Now, my Lord, one would imagine, that you hereby mean, that our Lord has in *theſe* Words declared what his Kingdom is; for without this, it cannot be true that he hath declared the *Nature of his Kingdom.* Whereas it is ſo far from being true, that he hath in *theſe Words* declared what his Kingdom is, that he has only, and that in one particular Reſpect, declared *what it is not.* If he had ſaid that his Kingdom was not a *Jewiſh* Kingdom, would this be declaring the Nature of his Kingdom? If a Perſon ſhould ſay that his Belief was not the Belief of the Church of *England*, would he in *theſe Words declare the Nature of his Belief?* Would it not ſtill be uncertain whether he was an *Arian* or *Socinian*, or ſomething different from them both? Thus our Saviour's ſaying that his *Kingdom is not of this World*, no more declares the Nature of his Kingdom, than a Perſon by ſaying *ſuch* a one was not his Son, would in *theſe Words* declare how many Children he had.

My Kingdom is not of this World, are very indeterminate Words, and capable of ſeveral Meanings, if we conſider them in them-

* *Serm.* p. 10.

ſelves.

ſelves. But as ſoon as we conſider them as an Anſwer to a particular Queſtion, they take one determinate Senſe. The Queſtion was, whether our Saviour was the (Temporal) *King of the Jews? Jeſus anſwered, my Kingdom is not of this World.* Now as theſe Words may ſignify no more than the Denial of what was aſked; as there is nothing in them that neceſſarily implies more, than that he was not a King as the *Jewiſh* or other Temporal Kings are; as the Queſtion extends the Anſwer no farther than this Meaning; ſo if we enlarge it, or fix any other Meaning to it, it is all human Reaſoning, without any Warrant from the Text.

Now, taking the Words in this Senſe, what a ſtrange Concluſion is this that your Lordſhip draws from it: That becauſe Chriſt ſaid his Kingdom was not a Temporal Kingdom as the *Jewiſh* and other Kingdoms were; therefore his Kingdom is *Inviſible*. Is it denied to be a Temporal Kingdom, *becauſe a* Temporal Kingdom is Viſible? If not, it will by no means follow, that it muſt be *Inviſible*, becauſe it is ſaid not to be Temporal. Muſt it be in every reſpect contrary to a Temporal Kingdom, becauſe it is ſaid not to be Temporal? Then it muſt have no Subjects, becauſe in Temporal Kingdoms there are Subjects; then there muſt be no King, becauſe in ſuch Kingdoms there are Kings. I ſuppoſe the Sacraments may in a very proper Senſe be

ſaid

ſaid to be not *Temporal Inſtitutions*, though they are as external and *Viſible* as any thing in the World; and conſequently the Church may be not Temporal in a very proper Senſe, without implying that it muſt therefore be *Inviſible*. Indeed I cannot conceive how your Lordſhip could have thought of a more odd Concluſion, than this which you have drawn from them. If you had concluded that becauſe Chriſt's Kingdom is not a Temporal Kingdom, therefore its Members are all of of an Age; it had been as well as to ſay, therefore they are *Inviſible*.

Nothing can be more ſurprizing, than to ſee your Lordſhip throughout your whole Sermon deſcribing this Kingdom, with all the Accuracy and Exactneſs imaginable, and even *demonſtrating* every particular Circumſtance of its Nature, from this little *Negative*, *that it is not a Temporal Kingdom*. Your Lordſhip muſt be very excellent at taking a *Hint*, or you could never have found out this *Kingdom* of God ſo exactly from ſo ſmall a Circumſtance. It ſeems, had this *little Text* been all the Scripture that we had left in the World, your Lordſhip could have revealed the reſt by the help of it. For there is nothing that relates to this Kingdom, or the Circumſtances of its Members, but you have purely by the Strength of your Genius, unaſſiſted by any other Scripture, proved and demonſtrated from this ſingle Paſſage.

If a Foreigner ſhould tell your Lordſhip, that his Houſe in his own Country was not as the Houſes are in this Kingdom, would it not be very wonderful in your Lordſhip, to be able to *demonſtrate* its Length and Breadth, to tell how many Rooms there are on a Floor, and to deſcribe every Beauty and Convenience of the Structure, merely from having been told that it was not like the Houſes in this Kingdom? But it would not be more wonderful, than to ſee your Lordſhip deſcribe the Nature of Chriſt's Kingdom, and explain every Circumſtance that concerns its Members, from having been told this Negative Circumſtance. Nor indeed is it much to be wondered, ſeeing you ſet out upon this bottom, if you give as falſe an Account of Chriſt's Kingdom, as you would do of an Houſe, that you only knew what it was not.

Again, you ſay, *As the Church of Chriſt is the Kingdom of Chriſt, he himſelf is King; and* in this *it is implyed that he is himſelf the ſole Law-giver to his Subjects, and himſelf the ſole Judge of their Behaviour* in the Affairs of Conſcience and Salvation *.

What a pretty fine-ſpun Conſequence is this, to be drawn from the above mentioned Text. Your Lordſhip here advances a mere human Speculation founded upon no other Authority, than the uncertain Signification

* *Serm.* p. 11.

of

of the Words, *King* and *Kingdom*; you ſay it is *in this implied that* becauſe *Chriſt is King* of his *Kingdom*, *he is the ſole Law-giver to his Subjects*. Pray, my Lord, why is it *in this* implied? Do the Words, *King* and *Kingdom* always imply the *ſame* thing? Has a King in one Kingdom the *ſame* Powers, which every King hath in another Kingdom? Has the King of *England* the ſame Power, which a King of *France*, or any Sovereign hath in his Kingdom? Would it be any reaſon why the King of *England* ſhould be *ſole* Law-giver to his Subjects, becauſe there are Kings who are ſole Law-givers to their Subjects? Now if the word, *King*, does not neceſſarily imply the *ſame* Power in every Kingdom, how can there be any Concluſion, that *becauſe* Chriſt is King of his Kingdom, he is ſole Law-giver to his Subjects? Yet your Lordſhip's whole Argument is founded upon this weak and falſe bottom, that the word, *King*, is to be taken in one abſolute and fixed Senſe: For you expreſsly ſay, it is *in this* implied, that *becauſe* he is King, he is ſole Law-giver. Now it is impoſſible it ſhould be implied *in this*, unleſs the word, *King*, always implies the ſame Power: For if there be any Difference in the Conſtitutions of Kingdoms, though they all have Kings, then it is plain nothing certain as to the Nature and Condition of any Kingdom, can be drawn from its having a King. But your Lordſhip has

deſcribed

deſcribed the Conſtitution of Chriſt's Kingdom, the Circumſtances of its Subjects, and in ſhort every thing that can concern it, as abſolutely, and with as much Certainty, from Chriſt's being King of it, as if the word, *King*, had but one Meaning, or every King the ſame Power.

Again, you tell us; *The groſſeſt Miſtakes in Judgment, about the Nature of Chriſt's Kingdom or Church, have ariſen from hence, that Men have argued from other Viſible Societies, and other Viſible Kingdoms of this World, to what ought to be Viſible and Senſible in his Kingdom.*

Is it thus, my Lord? Are all our groſs Errors owing to this way of Reaſoning? How then comes your Lordſhip to fall into this groſſeſt of Errors? How come you to ſtate the very Nature of Chriſt's Kingdom from the Conſideration of Temporal Kingdoms, or *Abſolute* Monarchies? How come you to argue from the Relation between a King and his Kingdom, to what ought to be in Chriſt's ſpiritual Kingdom? Are not Kings and Kingdoms Temporal Inſtitutions? Is not the Relation betwixt a King and his Kingdom a Temporal Relation? How then can you argue from theſe Temporal Kingdoms, to any thing concerning Chriſt's Kingdom? Why will your Lordſhip fall into ſo groſs an Error, as to aſſert that Chriſt muſt be *ſole* Law-giver to his Subjects,

Subjects, because there are some Temporal *Kings* who are sole Law-givers to their Subjects? Is there any Consequence in this Argument? Nay, are not all our Errors owing to this mistaken way of arguing?

The only way to know the Constitution of this Kingdom, is not to reason from what is implied in the Words *King* and *Kingdom*, for they do not imply *any fixed, or absolute* Sense, but from the Laws and Institutions of it, whether they admit of or require the Authority of under Magistrates. Thus, if it appears that Christ has commissioned others to act in his Name, to exercise Authority in his Kingdom, and govern his Subjects in such a manner as he has commissioned them to govern; Is it any Answer to this, to say, that *the Church is a Kingdom, and Christ is a King, and consequently sole Law-giver in it?* Is there nothing in this Text, *What soever ye shall bind on Earth shall be bound in Heaven*, &c. because Christ is King of his Church?

The whole Scheme of all your Doctrines is raised out of this single Text, *My Kingdom is not of this World*; which certainly implies no more, than if Christ had said, *I am not the Temporal King of the Jews.* Let us therefore see how your Lordship's Doctrines appear, if we bring them to the Principle from whence you had them: As thus,

thus, *Jesus is not the Temporal King of the Jews*, therefore there is no such thing as Church-Authority, no Obligation to join in any particular Communion. *Jesus* is not the Temporal King of the *Jews*, therefore *Absolutions*, *Benedictions*, and *Excommunications* are *Dreams* and *Trifles*; therefore no Succession or Order of Clergy is better than another.

Jesus is not the Temporal King of the *Jews*, therefore the *Invisible Church* is the *only true Church in the Mouth of a Christian*; therefore Sincerity alone, exclusive of any particular Communion, is the *only Title* to God's Favour. Now if the Papists should say, *Jesus is not* the *Temporal King* of the *Jews*, therefore there is a *Purgatory*, therefore we are to pray to *Saints*; they would shew as much true *Logick* and *Divinity*, as your Lordship has shewn in the Proof of your Doctrines from the above-mentioned Text. And I dare say, that every Reader of this Controversy knows, that you have not pretended to any other Proof from the Scriptures for your Doctrine, than what your Oratory could draw from this single Text.

This therefore, I hope, every Reader will observe, that all which you have advanced against the Universally Received Doctrines of Christianity, is only an *Harangue* upon this single Text, which every one's common Sense will tell him, contains nothing in it that can possibly

poſſibly determine the Cauſe, which you are engaged in. For who can imagine, that it is as well to be a ſincere *Turk* as a ſincere *Chriſtian*, or that a ſincere *Quaker* is as much in the Favour of God as a ſincere *Churchman*, *becauſe* our bleſſed Lord told *Pilate*, that *his Kingdom was not of this World*; and that in ſuch a manner, and upon ſuch an occaſion, as only to imply that he was not that King which he enquired after? Who can conceive that there is no particular Order of the Clergy neceſſary, no Neceſſiety of any particular Communion, no Authority in any Church, nor any Significancy in the ſacerdotal Powers, for this reaſon, becauſe there is a Text in Scripture, which denies that Chriſt was the *Temporal King of the Jews*.

Your Lordſhip has ſaid much of the Plainneſs and Simplicity of the Goſpel, and of its peculiar Fitneſs to be judged of, by the ordinary common Senſe of Mankind; you have alſo interpoſed in this Controverſy, to deliver them from the Authority of the Church, and turn them looſe to the Scriptures. But, my Lord, if this Text, *My Kingdom is not of this World*, which ſeems to common Senſe to contain only the Denial of a particular Queſtion, contains, as you have pretended, the whole Chriſtian Religion; and every other ſeemingly plain Part of the Goſpel is to take its Meaning from this Paſſage; if it be thus, my Lord, what can we conceive more myſte-

myſterious than the Scripture? Or more unequal to the common, ordinary Senſe of Men?

For how ſhould it come into a plain honeſt Man's Head; that this Text, which is nothing but the *Denial* of a *certain Queſtion*, ſhould be the *Key* to all the reſt of Scripture? How ſhould he know that the plaineſt Texts in Scripture were not to be underſtood in their apparent Meaning, but in ſome Senſe or other given them from this Text? Thus, when it is ſaid, *Go ye and diſciple all Nations; and lo I am with you to the end of the World:* The firſt apparent Senſe of theſe Words is this, that as Chriſt promiſed to be with the Apoſtles in the Execution of their Office, both as to *Authority* and *Power*, ſo he promiſes the ſame to their Succeſſors, the Biſhops, ſince he could no otherwiſe be with them to the End of the World, than by being with their Succeſſors. Now, my Lord, how ſhould an ordinary Thinker know that this plain Meaning of the Words was to be neglected, and that he was to go to the above-mentioned Text, to learn to underſtand, or rather diſbelieve them? For what is there in this Text, *My Kingdom is not of this World*, to ſhew either that Chriſt did not authorize the Apoſtles to ordain Succeſſors, who ſhould have his Authority, or that the Biſhops alone, are not ſuch Succeſſors? Is there any thing in this Text which can any way deter-

mine the Nature, the Neceſſity, or the Significancy of ſuch a Succeſſion?

Again it is ſaid, that *There is no other Name under Heaven given unto Men, whereby they may be ſaved but Jeſus Chriſt.* Now how ſhould a Man that has only common Senſe imagine, that he muſt reject this plain Meaning of the Words, and believe that a *ſincere Turk* is as much in the Favour of God as a *ſincere Chriſtian*, for this only reaſon, becauſe *Chriſt's Kingdom is not of this World?* It muſt not be common ordinary Senſe which can reaſon and diſcover at this rate.

Laſtly, it is ſaid, *Whatſoever ye ſhall bind on Earth, ſhall be bound in Heaven*, &c. Now how ſhall any one that has only *ſober* Senſe find out, that there is nothing at all left in this Text, that it only gave *ſomething or other to the Apoſtles*, but gives no Authority to any Perſons now, becauſe the *Kingdom of Chriſt is not of this World.*

Our Saviour told his Diſciples, that *they were not of this World*, but is that an Argument that they therefore became immediately inviſible? Was neither St. *Peter*, nor St. *Paul*, &c. ever to be ſeen afterwards? Why then muſt the Kingdom of Chriſt become immediately inviſible, becauſe it is ſaid not to be of this World, any more than its firſt Members were Inviſible, who were alſo declared to *be not of this World?*

Had

Had St. *Peter* or St. *Paul* no visible Power and Authority over the Presbyters and Deacons, because *they were not of this World?* If they had, why may not some Persons have Authority over others in Christ's Kingdom, though *it is not of this World?*

For our blessed Lord's saying that his Disciples *were not of this World*, does as strictly prove that St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* had no distinct Powers from Presbyters and Deacons, as his saying, that *his Kingdom was not of this World*, proves that there is no real or necessary Difference betwixt Bishops and Presbyters in his Kingdom. And it is as good Logick, to say the Disciples of Christ were not of this World, therefore there was no Necessity, that some should have been *Apostles*, and others *Presbyters*, &c. as to say Christ's Kingdom is not of this World, therefore there is no Necessity that some should be Bishops and others Presbyters in it.

I have been the more particular in examining the Text to your Sermon, and bringing your Doctrines close to it, that every Reader who has common Sense, may be able to perceive that they have no more Relation to that Text from which you would be thought to have them, than if you had deduced them from the first Verse in the first Chapter of *Genesis*.

And yet thus much every Reader must have observed, that it is your Explication of

this Text alone, which has led you to condemn all that Authority, to cenſure all thoſe Inſtitutions as *Dreams* and *Trifles*, which the holy Scriptures, and the firſt and pureſt Ages of Chriſtianity, have taught us to eſteem as ſacred in themſelves, being ordained by God; and of the greateſt Benefit to us, being means of obtaining his Grace, and Favour.

Thus far concerning the Nature of Chriſt's Church.

Of Church Authority.

I Come now to conſider what your Lordſhip has delivered upon the Article of *Church Authority*, as it is inveſted in the Governours of the Church. And here I have little elſe to do, but to clear it from thoſe *falſe Characters*, under which you have been pleaſed to deſcribe it.

Thus you begin; *If there be an Authority in any to judge, cenſure, or puniſh the Servants of another Maſter, in Matters purely relating to Conſcience and eternal Salvation; then Chriſt has left behind Judges over the Conſciences and Religion of his People; then the Conſciences and Religion of his People are ſubject to them whom he has left Judges*

Judges over them; and then there is a Right in some Christians to determine the Religion and Consciences of others. And what is more, if the Decisions of any Men can be made to concern or affect the State of Christ's Subjects with regard to the Favour of God, then the Salvation of some Christians depends upon the Sentence passed by others *.

Here is the Sum of what you have advanced from *Reason* and the *Nature* of the Thing against the Authority of Church Governours; which you would have pass for a strict Proof, that if they have any Authority in *Matters purely* relating to *Conscience* derived to them from Christ, that then their Authority can *damn* or *save* at pleasure.

But, my Lord, in this *same strict* way of Reasoning, and by only using your own Words, I will as plainly prove that a *Father* hath not Authority even to send his Children of an *Errand*.

For, "If the Christian Religion authorises "a *Father* to judge the Servants of another "Master in *Matters purely* relating to *Mo-* "*tion*, then Christ has left behind him "Judges *over* the *Motion* of his People, "then the *Motion* of his People is subjected "to *them* whom he has left Judges over *it*; "and then there is a *Right* in some *Christians*

* *Answ. to Repr.* p. 27.

" to determine the *Motion* of others. And " what is more, if the *Determinations* of " any Men can concern or affect the State " of Christ's Subjects with regard to *Motion*, " then the Lives of some Christians depend " upon the Determination passed by others; " because they may determine them to move " from the *top* of a Precipice to the *bottom*.

Here, my Lord, I freely leave it to the Judgment of *common Sense*, whether I have not in your *own Words* proved it as absurd and unreasonable, that a *Father* should have any Power over his Son, so as to send him of an *Errand*, as to allow the Church to have Authority in Matters of *Conscience* and *Salvation*; and the Consequence, according to your Argument, is *equally* dreadful in both Cases: For it is as plain that if *Fathers* have Authority in Matters of *Motion*, then they may *move* their Sons to the *bottom* of a *Precipice*; as that if the *Church* hath Authority in *Matters of Salvation*, then it may *save* or *damn* at pleasure; and it is as well proved, that *Fathers* have no Authority in Matters of *Motion*, because they have no Authority to command their Children to *destroy* themselves, as that the Church hath no Authority in Matters of *Conscience* and *Salvation*, because they have not an Authority to *damn* People for ever: For there is the same room for *Degrees* in the Authority of the Church, which there is for *Degrees* in the Authority

of

of *Parents*; and it is as juſtly concluded that *Parents* have no Authority in Matters of any *particular Nature*, becauſe they have not *unlimited* Authority in things of that *particular Nature*, as that the *Church* hath no Authority in *Matters of Conſcience and Salvation*, becauſe it has not an abſolute unlimited Authority in *theſe Matters*.

Yet this is the whole of your Argument againſt *Church Authority*, that it cannot relate to Matters of Conſcience and Salvation, becauſe an Authority in *theſe Matters*, is an *abſolute Authority* over the Souls of others; which is juſt as true, as if any one ſhould declare that a *Father* hath no Authority in *Matters* purely relating to the *Body* of his Son, becauſe an *Authority* in *theſe* Matters, is an *abſolute* Authority to diſpoſe of his *Body* as he pleaſes.

Suppoſe it ſhould be ſaid, that a *Father* hath Authority over his Son in *Civil Affairs*; Will it be an Argument that he has no ſuch Authority, becauſe he has not *all*, or an *unlimited* Authority in *Civil Affairs?* Will it be an Argument that he has no Authority in *ſuch Matters*, becauſe his Son it not *wholly* and *entirely* ſubjected to him in ſuch Matters? Has a Father no Right to chuſe an *Employment* for his Son, or govern him in ſeveral things of a *Civil Nature*, becauſe he cannot oblige him to reſign his *Title* to his *Eſtate*, or take from him the Benefit of the *Laws* of the *Land?*

If he has an Authority in these Matters, though not *all*, why cannot the Governours of the Church have an Authority in *Matters of Conscience*, though they have not *all*, or an *unlimited* Authority in Matters of Conscience? How does it follow that they have no such Authority, because Christians are not *wholly* and *absolutely* subjected to them in *such* Matters? Why can there not be *Bounds* to an Authority in *Matters of Conscience*, as well as *Bounds* to an Authority in *Civil Affairs?* And if a *Father* may have Authority over his *Son* in *Civil Affairs*, though that Authority is limited by the *Laws* of the Land, and the superior Authority of the *Civil Magistrate*; why may not the Church have an Authority in *Matters of Conscience* and Salvation, though that Authority is *limited* by the *Scriptures*, and the supreme *Authority* of God?

He therefore who concludes the Church hath no Authority in Matters of *Salvation*, because it cannot *absolutely* save or damn People, reasons as *strictly*, as he who concludes a Person has *no Authority* in *Civil Affairs*, because he cannot grant or take away *Civil Privileges* of the *highest* Nature.

What therefore your Lordship has thus *logically* advanced against the *Authority* of the Church, concludes with the *same Force* against *all* Authority in the World. For if the Church hath no Authority in Matters of Conscience,

ſcience, for this *demonſtrative Reaſon*, becauſe it hath not an *unlimited* Authority in *Matters of Conſcience*; then it is alſo *demonſtrated* that no Perſons have any Authority in *any particular* Matters, becauſe they have not an *abſolute unbounded Authority* in thoſe *particular Matters*.

As thus; A *Prince* hath no Authority to oblige his Subjects to make *War* againſt *ſuch* a People, becauſe he hath not an *unlimited* Authority to oblige his Subjects to fight *where*, and *when*, and with *whom* he pleaſes.

A *Father* hath no Authority over the *Perſons* or *Affairs* of his *Children*, becauſe he cannot diſpoſe of the *Perſons* and *Affairs* of his Children in what manner he will.

Maſters have no Authority to command the *Aſſiſtance* of their *Servants*, becauſe they cannot oblige them to *aſſiſt* in a *Rebellion* or *Robbery*.

Thus are all theſe *particular Authorities*, as plainly confuted by your *Argument*, as the Authority of the Church is confuted by it.

But now, my Lord, have neither *Maſters*, nor *Fathers*, nor *Princes*, any Authority in theſe *particular* Matters, becauſe they have no Authority to command at *any rate*, or as they pleaſe in theſe Matters? If they have, why may not the Governours of the *Church* have an Authority in *Matters of Conſcience*, though they cannot oblige Conſcience at *any rate*,

rate, or as they please? Why may not they have an Authority in Matters of Salvation, though they have not Power absolutely to damn or save?

Your Lordship would therefore have done as much Justice to Truth, and as much Service to the World, if, instead of calling Christians from the Authority of the *Church*, you had publickly declared that neither *Masters*, nor *Fathers*, nor *Princes*, have, *properly speaking*, any *real* Authority over their respective *Servants*, *Sons*, and *Subjects*, and that because they are none of them to be obeyed but in *such* and *such* Circumstances, and upon certain supposed Conditions. For you have plainly declared there is no Authority in the Church, that it has no Power of obliging, because we are only to obey upon *Terms* and *certain supposed Conditions*. If therefore this *conditional* Obedience proves that there is, *properly speaking*, no *Authority* in the Church, then that conditional Obedience of *Servants*, *Sons*, and *Subjects*, proves that neither their *Masters*, *Fathers*, or *Princes*, *have* any Authority *properly speaking*.

You say; *If there be a Power in some* OVER *others in Matters of Religion, so as to determine these others; then all Communions are upon an equal foot, without any regard to any intrinsick Goodness; or whether they be right or wrong; then no Religion is in itself preferable to another,*

ther, but all are alike with respect to the Favour of God *.

Now, my Lord, all this might, with as much Truth, be said of any other Authority, as of Church Authority.

As thus; "If there be a *Power* in the "*Prince*, or in *some* over others in *Matters* "*of War and Fighting*, so as to determine "those others; then all *Wars* and *Fightings* "are upon an *equal* foot, without any re- "gard to any intrinsick Goodness; or whe- "ther they be *right* or *wrong*; then no "*Wars* or *Fightings* are in themselves pre- "ferable to others, but all are alike with re- "spect to the Favour of God.

And now, my Lord, what must we say here? Has the Prince no *Right* or *Power* to command his Subjects to wage War with such a People? Or if he has this Power over them, does this make *all* Wars *alike?* Does this Authority leave nothing to the *Justice* or *Equity* of *Wars*, but make all Wars *exactly* the same with regard to the *Favour* of God?

Does this Authority of the *Prince* make all *Engagements* equally lawful to the Subject that engages by his Authority? Is he neither *more* or *less* in the Favour of God, for whatever Cause he fights in, because he has the Authority of his Prince? Is it as pleasing to

* *Answ. to Repr.* p. 114.

God

God that under such Authority he should make War upon the *Innocent*, plunder and ravage the *Fatherless* and *Widows*, as engage in the Cause of *Equity* and *Honour?*

Now, my Lord, if *all Wars* are not alike to the Persons who are concerned in them, *as to the Favour of God*; if there can be *any Cases* supposed, where it is not only *lawful*, but *honourable* and *glorious* for Soldiers to disobey the *Orders* of their *Prince*; then it is past doubt, that Soldiers *may* and *ought* to have some regard to the *Nature* and *Justice* of the *Orders* they have from their Prince.

But we have your Lordship's Assurance, that if they may have *any* regard to the *Nature* and *Justice* of their *Orders*, then *there is an end of all Authority*, and an *end of all Power of one Man over another in such Matters*.

So that you have as plainly confuted *all Authority* of the *Prince* over his Soldiers in *Matters purely* Military, as you have confuted all Authority of the *Church* in *Matters purely* of Conscience. For it is plain to every Understanding, that if there is an end of all Authority in Religion, because Persons may have some regard to the *intrinsick Goodness of things* *, that therefore there is an end of all *Regal Authority* over Soldiers, if Soldiers may have any regard to the *Na-*

* *Answ. to Repr.* p. 115.

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ture and *Juſtice* of their *Military Orders.*

Your Argument againſt Church Authority conſiſts of two Parts; the *firſt Part* is taken from the *Nature* of *Authority*, and proceeds thus: *If there be an Authority in Matters of Conſcience, it muſt be an abſolute Authority over Conſcience, ſo as to be obeyed in all its Commands of what kind ſoever*; which is as falſe as if it were ſaid, that if a Father hath Authority over the *Perſon* of his Son, then he hath an *abſolute* Authority to do what he will with his *Perſon*; or if he hath Authority over his Son in *Civil Affairs*, then he hath an *abſolute unlimited* Authority in the *Civil Affairs* of his Son.

The *other Part* of your Argument, is taken from the *Nature* of *Obedience*, and proceeds in this manner: *If Perſons may have ſome regard to the intrinſick Goodneſs of things* in Religion, then there is an end of *all Authority* in Matters of Religion; which is as falſe as to ſay, that if a *Soldier* may have *ſome regard* to the *Nature* and *Juſtice* of the *Military Orders* of his *Prince*, then there is an end of all Authority of the *Prince* over his Soldiers in *Military Affairs*; or if a Servant may have *ſome regard* to the *Lawfulneſs* of the *Commands* of his Maſter, then there is an end of *all Authority* of Maſters over their Servants as to ſuch Matters.

So

So that if there be any ſuch thing as Authority either in *Maſters*, or *Fathers*, or *Princes*, then *both Parts* of your Argument are confuted; for none of theſe have any other than a *limited* Authority, nor do their reſpective *Servants*, *Sons*, or *Subjects*, owe them any other *active* Obedience, but ſuch as is *conditional*.

Now if it can be any way proved that *Obedience* to our *Maſters*, *Parents*, and *Princes* is a very great *Duty*, and *Diſobedience* a very great *Sin*; though they cannot oblige us to act againſt the Laws of God, or the Laws of our *Country*; then it will follow that *Obedience* to our *Spiritual* Governours may be a very great *Duty*, and Diſobedience a very great *Sin*; though they cannot oblige us to ſubmit to their *ſinful* or *unlawful* Commands.

And if *common* Reaſon, the *Laws* of God, and our *Country* be ſufficient to direct us, where to *ſtop* in our *active* Obedience to our *Maſters*, *Fathers*, or *Princes*, though they have Authority from God to demand our Obedience; the *ſame Guides* will with the *ſame Certainty* teach us where to *ſtop* in our Obedience to the Authority of the Church, though that Authority be ſet over us by God himſelf.

Though this might be thought ſufficient to ſhew the Weakneſs of your Arguments againſt the Authority of the Church, yet I

ſhall

ſhall beg leave to examine them a little farther in another manner.

You ſay the Authority which you deny, is only an *Authority in Matters relating purely to Conſcience and eternal Salvation*, an Authority whoſe Laws and *Deciſions affect the State of Chriſt's* Subjects with regard to the Favour of God; and the reaſon of your denying it is this, that if this Authority, or *Laws*, or *Deciſions of Men can concern or affect the State of Chriſt's Subjects with regard to the Favour of God, then the eternal Salvation of ſome Chriſtians depends upon the Sentence paſſed by others* *.

In order to lay open the Weakneſs of this Reaſoning, I ſhall ſtate the Meaning of the Propoſitions of which it conſiſts.

And, firſt, I ſuppoſe an Authority may be properly ſaid to affect the *State* of People with regard to the *Favour* of God, when their *Obedience* to ſuch an Authority procures his Favour, and their *Contempt* of it raiſes his deſpleaſure; and I believe that this is not only a proper Senſe, but the *only* proper Senſe which the Words are capable of.

It is certainly true that the Authority of our bleſſed Saviour, was an Authority which *affected* the *State* of the *Jews* with regard to the *Favour* of God; but yet it no other-

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 28.

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wiſe affected their State, than as their Obedience to his Authority was pleaſing to God, and their Diſobedience to it, the Cauſe of his farther Diſpleaſure. This is the *only* way in which the Authority of Chriſt affected the *State* of People with regard to the Favour of God; and therefore is the *only* manner in which any other Authority can be ſuppoſed to affect Perſons with regard to the Favour of God.

Secondly; Any *Things* or *Matters* may be properly ſaid to relate to *Conſcience* and *eternal Salvation*, when the Obſervance of them is a *Means* of obtaing Salvation, and the Neglect of them, an *Hindrance* to our Salvation. Thus *Baptiſm* and the *Supper* of the Lord, are Matters relating to *Conſcience* and eternal *Salvation*, but then they are only ſo, for this reaſon, becauſe the partaking of theſe Sacraments, is a *Means* of obtaining Salvation, and the Refuſal of them, is an *Hindrance* of our Salvation. He therefore who hath Authority in *ſuch things*, as by our obſerving of them we promote our Salvation, and by our neglecting of them, we hinder our Salvation, he has in the utmoſt Propriety of the Words, an *Authority in Matters of Conſcience and Salvation.*

Hence it appears that it is not peculiar or appropriate to the Authority of the Church *alone*, to relate to Matters of Conſcience and eternal Salvation, but *equally* belongs to every other

other Authority which can be called the *Ordinance* of God.

Now all lawful Authority, whether of *Masters*, *Fathers*, or *Princes*, is the *Ordinance* of God, and the respective Duties of their *Servants*, *Children*, and *Subjects*, are as truly Matters of *Conscience* and eternal *Salvation*, as their Observance of any Part of the Christian Religion is a Matter of *Conscience* and eternal *Salvation*: And it is not more their Duty to receive the *Sacrament*, or worship God in any particular manner, than to obey their respective Governours; nor does it more *concern* or *affect their State* with regard to the *Favour* of God, whether they neglect *those Duties* which particularly regard his *Service*, or *those Duties* which they owe to their *proper* Governours. So that *Conscience* and eternal Salvation are *equally* concerned in *both* Cases.

For *things* may as well be Matters of *Conscience* and eternal *Salvation*, though they are of a Civil or Secular Nature, as the *positive Institutions* of Christ are Matters of *Conscience* and *Salvation*.

For *Baptism* has no more of Religion in its *own Nature*, nor has of *itself* any more concern with our Salvation, than any Action that is merely *Secular* or *Civil*. But as Baptism by *Institution* becomes our *Duty*, and so is a Matter of *Conscience* and *Salvation*; so when Actions merely *Secular* and *Indifferent*,

are by a *Lawful* Authority made our *Duty*, they are as truly Matters of *Conſcience* and *Salvation*, as any Parts of Religion.

The Difference betwixt a *Spiritual* and *Temporal* Authority does not conſiſt *in this*, that one relates to Matters of *Conſcience* and Salvation, and *concerns* and *affects* our *State* with regard to the *Favour* of God, and the other does not; but the Difference is this, that *one* preſides over us in things relating to Religion and the *Service* of God, the *other* preſides over us in things relating to *Civil Life*; and as our Salvation depends as *certainly* upon our Behaviour in things relating to *Civil Life*, as in things relating to the *Service* of God, it follows that they are *both equally Matters* of *Conſcience* and *Salvation*: And as the *Temporal* Authority is the *Ordinance* of God, to which we are to ſubmit, not only *for Wrath*, but alſo for *Conſcience ſake*, it undeniably follows, that this *Temporal* Authority as *truly concerns* and *affects* our State with regard to the *Favour* of God, as any Authority in Matters *purely* relating to Religion. For ſuch an Authority could in *no other* Senſe *affect* our State with regard to the *Favour* of God, than by our Obedience or Diſobedience to it; but our State with regard to the Favour of God is as *truly affected* by our *Obedience*, or *Diſobedience* to our Lawful Sovereign, as by our obſerving or neglecting any Duty in the World;

World; and consequently the *Temporal* Authority as *truly affects* our *State* with regard to the *Favour* of God, as any Authority in Matters of Religion.

Seeing therefore, by an Authority in Matters of *Conscience* and *Salvation*, by an Authority which can *affect* our *State* with regard to the *Favour* of God, nothing more is implied, than an Authority to which our Obedience is a *Duty*, and our Disobedience a *Sin*, which is the Case of every Lawful Authority; it plainly appears, that all those *frightful* Consequences, those *Dangers* to the Souls of Men which you have charged upon such *Church Authority*, are as truly chargeable upon *Masters*, *Fathers*, and *Princes*, and make their several Authorities as dangerous Powers over the Salvation of others, as the Authority of the Church.

Thus, when your *Demonstration* proceeds in this manner; *If there be an Authority in some over others in Matters* purely *relating to Conscience and Salvation, then the Salvation of some People will depend upon others.* Which, if we set it in a true Light, ought to proceed thus; *If there be an Authority in Matters of Religion, to which our Obedience is a Duty, and our Disobedience a Sin, then the Salvation of some People depends upon others.*

But, my Lord, what a Sagacity must he have who can see this dismal Consequence?

Who can ſee that *Maſters*, *Fathers*, and *Princes*, have a Power over the Souls *of others* either to *damn* or *ſave* them, becauſe Obedience to their Authority is a *Duty*, and Diſobedience a *Sin?*

Your Lordſhip cannot here ſay, that *an Authority* in *Matters purely relating to Conſcience* and *eternal Salvation*, is not expreſſed *high* enough, by being deſcribed as an *Authority to which our Obedience is a Duty, and our Diſobedience a Sin.* For, my Lord, no Authority, however concerned in things of the greateſt Importance in *Religion* and *Salvation*, can poſſibly be an Authority of an *higher* Nature, than that *Authority to which our Obedience is a Duty, and our Diſobedience a Sin.* It was in this *Senſe alone*, that the Authority of our *Saviour* himſelf *affected* the State of the *Jews* with regard to the *Favour* of God; his Authority was of an *high* and *concerning* Nature to them only for this Reaſon, becauſe their Obedience to it was their Duty, and their Diſobedience their Sin.

If we now conſider this Authority in the Church, in this true Manner in which it ought to be conſidered, your Lordſhip's Argument againſt it, either proves a deal too much, or nothing at all.

Thus, if the Conſequence be juſt, that if it be Sin to diſobey the Church, then the Church hath a Power of damning us; then

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it is as good a Conſequence in regard to other Authority; as thus, *It is a Sin to diſobey our Parents, therefore our Parents have a Power of damning us*; it is a Sin to diſobey our *Prince*, therefore *our Prince has a Power of damning us*. Theſe Conſequences are evidently as *juſt* and *true*, as that other drawn from Church Authority; ſo that all thoſe *diſmal Charges* which you have fixed upon *Church Authority*, are as falſe Accounts of it, as if you had aſſerted that every *Father*, or *Maſter*, or *Prince*, who demands Obedience from his *Child*, *Servant*, or *Subject*, in point of *Duty*, or by declaring that their Diſobedience is a *Sin*, does thereby prove himſelf to be a *Pope*, and to have the Souls of others at his Diſpoſal. For it is out of all doubt, that if the *Governours* of the Church by demanding Obedience to them in point of *Duty*, or by declaring Diſobedience to be *Sin*, do thereby aſſert the Claims of *Popery*, and aſſume a Power to diſpoſe of the Souls of the People; that any other Authority which requires this Obedience as a *Duty* of Conſcience, and forbids Diſobedience as *Sin*, does thereby claim the Authority of the *Pope*, and pretend to a Power over the Souls of others.

So that if your Lordſhip has deſtroyed Church Authority, which pretends Obedience to be a *Duty*, as a *Popiſh Claim*; you have alſo as *certainly* deſtroyed every other Au-

thority which demands Obedience as a *Duty*, as being equally a *Popiſh Preſumption*.

Whenever therefore you ſhall pleaſe to call away *Servants*, *Children*, or *Subjects* from their reſpective *Maſters*, *Fathers*, and *Princes*, you have as many *Demonſtrations* ready to prove them *all Papiſts*, if they will ſtick by their Obedience to them as a *Duty of Conſcience*, and to prove their Governours *all Popes*, if they declare their Diſobedience to be *Sin*, as you have to prove Church Authority to be a *Popiſh Claim*. And I muſt beg leave to affirm, that they are as much miſled who follow your Lordſhip againſt the Authority of the Church, as if they ſhould follow you in the *ſame Argument* againſt owning any Authority of their *Parents* and *Princes*.

The Intent of all this is only to ſhew, that though there is an Authority in the Church, to which our Obedience is a *Duty* and our Diſobedience a *Sin* (which is as high an Authority as can be claimed) yet this Authority implies no more a *frightful* Power of *diſpoſing* of our Souls, than any other Lawful Authority, which it is a *Sin* to diſobey, implies ſuch a Power.

For where is the Danger to our Souls? How is our Salvation made ſubject to the Pleaſure of our Church Governours, becauſe God has appointed them to direct us in the manner of worſhipping him, and to preſide over things relating to Religion, and made it

our

our Duty to obey them? How does this imply a dangerous Power over our Salvation? If we ſin againſt this Authority, we endanger our Salvation as we do by neglecting *any other Ordinance* of God; and our Damnation is no more affected by any *Power* in the Perſons, whom we may be damned for diſobeying, than a Perſon that is *damned* for *killing* his Father, is damned by any *Power* of his *Father*'s.

Neither is it in the Power of the Governours in the Church, though they have Authority in Matters of Salvation, to make our Salvation any more difficult to us, than if they had no *ſuch* Authority.

For all their Injunctions muſt be either *Lawful*, or *Unlawful*; if they are *Lawful*, then by our Obedience to an *Ordinance* of God, we recommend our ſelves to the Favour of God; and ſure there is no harm in this Authority thus far. And if their Commands are *Unlawful*, then by our not obeying them, we ſtill pleaſe God, in chuſing rather to obey him than Men, where *both cannot* be obeyed. And where, my Lord, is the Terror of this Authority ſo much complained of? How does this make our Salvation lie at the Mercy of our *Church Governours?* We are ſtill as truly ſaved or damned by our own Behaviour, as though they had no *ſuch Authority* over us; and though we may make their Authority the *Occaſion* of our Damnation, by

our rebelling againſt it, yet it is only in ſuch a manner as any one may make *Baptiſm*, or the *Supper* of the Lord, the *Occaſion* of his Damnation, by a prophane Refuſal of them.

Upon the whole of this Matter, it appears, Firſt, that when the Authority of the Church is ſaid to be an *Authority* in *Matters* of *Conſcience and Salvation*, or an Authority which *concerns* and *affects our State* with *regard to the* Favour of God; that this is the only true Meaning of thoſe Propoſitions, *viz.* an *Authority in Matters of Religion, to which Obedience is a Duty, and Diſobedience a Sin.*

Secondly, That this Authority to which we are *thus obliged*, is as conſiſtent with our working out our own Salvation, and no more puts our Souls into the Diſpoſal of ſuch Authority, then our Salvation is at the Mercy of our *Parents* and *Princes*, becauſe to obey their Authority is a *great Duty*, and to diſobey it, a *great Sin.*

Your Lordſhip has yet another Argument againſt *Church Authority*, taken from the Nature of our Reformation, which it ſeems cannot be defended, if there was then this *Church Authority* we have been pleading for.

Thus you ſay; *If there be a Church Authority, I beg to know, how can the Reformation itſelf be juſtified* *.

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* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 117.

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My Lord, I cannot but wonder this ſhould be a Difficulty with your Lordſhip, who has writ ſo *famous* a Treatiſe to inform People, *how* they not only *may*, but *ought* in point of *Duty* to get rid of a *real* Authority; I mean in your Defence of *Reſiſtance*.

I ſuppoſe it is taken for granted, that *James* the Second was King of *England*, that he had a *Regal* Authority over all the People of *England*, and that they all of what Station ſoever were his *Subjects*; yet granting this *Regal* Authority in him, and this State of *Subjection* in all the People of *England*, your Lordſhip *knows how to ſet aſide* that Government, and ſet up another Government; and even to make it our *Duty* as *Men* and *Proteſtants* to ſet up another Government.

Now ſince you know how to get rid of this Authority in ſo *Chriſtian* and *Proteſtant* a manner, one cannot but wonder how you ſhould be at a loſs to juſtify the *Reformation*, without ſuppoſing that the Church at *that time* had no Authority.

For did you ever juſtify the *Revolution*, becauſe *James* the Second had no *Kingly Authority*, or that the People of *England* were not his *Subjects?* Nay, did you not defend it upon the quite contrary Suppoſition, that though *James* the Second had a *Regal* Authority, though all the People of *England* were his *Subjects*, and had ſwore to be his *faithful* Subjects,

Subjects, yet in ſpight of all theſe Conſiderations, did you not aſſert that they not only *might*, but *ought* to ſet him aſide and chuſe another Governour in his ſtead?

And yet after all this, you *know not how* to defend the *Reformation*, it is a perfectly loſt Cauſe, and not a word to be ſaid for it, unleſs we ſuppoſe that there was no *Authority* in the Church when we *reformed* from it. Surely if your Lordſhip loved to defend the *Reformation*, as well as you loved to defend the *Revolution*, you would not have ſo *many* Reaſons for one, and *none* for the other.

For ſuppoſing an Authority in the Church, will not *Tyranny*, *Breach* of *Fundamentals*, and *unlawful Terms* of Communion, defend our Departure from a *real* Authority in the Church, as well as any *Grievances* or *Oppreſſions* will defend our leaving a *real* Authority in the State?

What a *pitiful* Advocate, what a *Betrayer* of the *Rights* of the People would you reckon him, who ſhould ſay, *If there was any Regal Authority in* James *the Second, if the People of* England *were his* Subjects; *I beg to know, how can the* Revolution *itſelf be juſtified?*

Yet juſt ſuch an *Advocate* are you, juſt ſuch a *Betrayer* of the *Reformation*, you cannot defend it, it has no bottom to ſtand upon; and if there was any *Authority* in the Church before the *Reformation*, *you beg to know*,

know, how the *Reformation itself can be juſtified?*

My Lord, I do not urge this to ſhew either that the *Revolution* and *Reformation* are equally juſtifiable, or that they both are to be juſtified upon the *ſame* Reaſons; but to ſhew that your Lordſhip from *your own Principles*, needed not to have wanted as good Reaſons for the *Reformation*, as you have produced for the *Revolution*, even ſuppoſing the Church of *Rome* had as *real* an Authority over us as *James* the Second had, and that we were as truly in a State of Subjection to that Church before the *Reformation*, as we were in a State of Subjection to that King before the *Revolution*.

Again, you proceed thus; *For there was then* (at the Time of the Reformation) *a* Church, *and an Order of* Church-men, *veſted with all ſuch ſpiritual Authority, as is of the Eſſence of the Church. There was therefore a* Church Authority *to* oblige *Chriſtians; and a Power in ſome* over *others. What was it therefore to which we owe this very* Church *of* England * ?

Now, my Lord, I hope you will grant, that juſt at the Time of the *Revolution*, "there was then a *King*, veſted with all ſuch "Civil Authority as is of the Eſſence of a "*King*. There was therefore a *Regal Au-*

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 118.

"*thority*

" *thority* to oblige the People of *England*,
" and a Power in one over others. What
" was it therefore to which we owe this very
" *Revolution* in *England?*"

I ſuppoſe you will ſay that we owe it, not to any *Want* of Authority in the late King *James*, but to his *Abuſe* of his Authority: Why therefore is it not as eaſy to account for the *Reformation*, not from the *Want*, but the *Abuſe* of Authority in the Church of *Rome?* Is it an Argument that the People of *England* were no *Subjects*, under no Government, nor had any *King*, becauſe they would no longer ſubmit to the *Oppreſſions* and *Grievances* of a late Reign, but aſſerted their *Liberties* and appealed to the Conditions of the *Original Contract?*

If not, why is it an Argument that the Church had *no Authority*, becauſe ſome Years ago the People of *England* would no longer ſubmit to the *Corruptions*, and *unlawful* Injunctions of the Church of *Rome*, but appealed to the *Scriptures*, and the Practice of the *firſt* and *pureſt* Ages of Chriſtianity?

If your Lordſhip was ſo entirely conſiſtent with your ſelf as you tell us you are; if you never purſued an Argument farther than the plain Reaſon of it led you; how is it poſſible that you, who have ſo ſtrenuouſly defended the *Reſiſtance* of People againſt a *Legal King**,

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* *Sev. Tracts.* p. 332.

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(for ſo you expreſsly call him) ſhould declare that our Separation from the Church of *Rome* cannot be *juſtified*, without ſuppoſing that the Church of *Rome* had never any Authority over us?

For ſuppoſing that Church had been really our Sovereign in Affairs of Religion, is it not ſtrange that you, who have aſſerted that our *preſent Settlement is owing entirely to the taking up Arms, and adhering to ſuch as were in Arms againſt* their Sovereign *, ſhould yet declare that our oppoſing the Church of *Rome*, cannot be juſtified but by ſuppoſing, that ſhe never had any *Sovereignty* over us?

Is it not yet ſtranger, that you, who have defended the *Revolution* by comparing it to the *Reformation*, ſhould yet declare that the *Reformation* cannot be juſtified without ſuppoſing that the Church of *England* was under no Authority of the Church of *Rome?*

For, my Lord, if the Church of *England* had not been under the *Authority* of the Church of *Rome*, how could our *oppoſing* that Church be compared to the *reſiſting* of King *James?* How could our *Separation* from that Church be a Defence of our *withdrawing* our *Allegiance* from King *James*, without ſuppoſing that the Church before that *Separation*, had as *Real* and *Legal* Authority as that King had before the *Revolution?*

* *Ibid.* p. 366.

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Your Words are these; *Why should that (i. e.* Resistance) *be absolutely and entirely condemned, as a damnable Sin, any more than* Church Separation, *by which we got rid of the* Tyranny *of* Rome? And again, *All Church* Reformation, *is not Church* Destruction; *Why therefore must* all Resistance *be called* Rebellion **?*

Now is it not very strange, my Lord, that after this, you should assert that the Church had *no Authority* before the *Reformation*; and that if it had any Authority, then our *Separation* from it cannot be *justified?* Is not this very strange, after you had used it as an Argument to justify the withdrawing of our Allegiance from King *James* the Second?

For let us suppose with you, that there was *no Church Authority* at the time of the *Reformation*, and then see how excellent an Argument you have found out in Defence of the *Revolution*, which, upon this Supposition, must proceed in this manner.

The Church of *England might* separate from the Church of *Rome*, who had *no Authority* over her; therefore the People of *England* might resist their *Legal* King, who had a Regal Authority over them. Again, The Clergy of *England*, who were *no Subjects* of the Church of *Rome*, *might* separate from that Church; therefore the People of

* *Serv. Tracts.* p. 334.

England,

England, who were *Subjects* to King *James* the Second, might withdraw their *Allegiance* from him.

Thus abſurd is your Argument made, by ſuppoſing that the Church had not as real and rightful an Authority before the *Reformation*, as *James* the Second had before the *Revolution*.

Farther; Let us ſuppoſe with your Lordſhip, that *if there was a real Authority in the Church at the time of the Reformation*, then the Reformation *has no bottom*, *but is altogether unjuſtifiable*; let us ſuppoſe that this Doctrine is true, and then ſee how *conſiſtently* you have argued upon this Suppoſition.

You ſay the *Reformation* cannot be juſtified; it has no *bottom* to ſtand upon, if the Church of *Rome* had a real Authority; yet this *Oppoſition*, which is ſo entirely *wrong*, becauſe an *Oppoſition* to Authority, is brought by you as a *parallel Caſe* to prove that the *Reſiſtance* againſt the *Authority* of King *James* was entirely *right*. This *Reformation*, which if it was brought about againſt any *Church Authority*, is ſaid to be for that *very Reaſon* without any *bottom*, and to have no *Foundation*, is uſed by your Lordſhip to point out the *true Bottom* and *firm Foundation* of the *Revolution*.

And here let all the World judge, whether *Reaſon* and *Religion* alone can induce any one

one to maintain the *Truth*, the *Juſtice*, the *Honour*, the *Chriſtianity* of the Revolution, as founded upon Reſiſtance to a Legal King; and yet condemn at the ſame time the *Reformation*, as having neither *Reaſon*, nor *Truth*, nor *Juſtice* to ſupport it, as founded upon a Departure from a real Authority in the Church of *Rome*. For *Reaſon* and *Religion* do as plainly give leave to depart from the *higheſt* Authority in the Church, when the Laws of God cannot be obſerved without departing from it, as in any other Caſe; and there is no more Neceſſity of ſuppoſing or proving that there was no rightful Authority in the Church, to juſtify our departing from it, than it is neceſſary to prove ſuch a Perſon not to be my *Father*, or to have no *Authority* over me, in order to juſtify my diſobeying his *unlawful Commands*.

Again, your Lordſhip is farther at a loſs about the *Reformation*, which cannot poſſibly be juſtified, if afterwards, an *Authority* in Matters of *Conſcience* and *Salvation*, be ſtill claimed.

Thus you ſay; *Nor can I ever underſtand, upon this bottom* (*viz.* the claiming ſuch Authority) *what it was that could* move *or* juſtify *thoſe, who broke off from the Tyranny of the Church of* Rome; *unleſs it be ſufficient to ſay, that it was only* that Power might change Hands *.

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 48.

Here

Here your Lordſhip cannot conceive any thing more unjuſtifiable than the *Reformation*, if *Church Authority* is ſtill to be kept up; nor can you upon this Claim aſſign any other Pretence for *reforming*, but *only* that Power might change Hands.

Did your Lordſhip then never hear of the *Juſtice* of removing one Authority, and ſetting up another? Can you think of no Caſe, where *Equity*, *Honour*, and *Duty*, called upon a People to *reſiſt* one Power, and yet make another to ſucceed?

Now if this Practice can be equitable and honourable, and is aſſerted to be ſo by your Lordſhip, can it be conceived, that *Reaſon alone* ſhould induce you to load the *Reformation* with ſo much *Guilt* and *Injuſtice*, to condemn it as ſo groundleſs an Undertaking; becauſe though it ſet aſide the *Tyrannical* Authority of the Church of *Rome*, yet it aſſerted a true Church Authority, and made Obedience to it neceſſary to obtain the Favour of God.

Suppoſe ſome Friend to the *Revolution*, after hearing that the *Prince* of *Orange* was proclaimed King, and a *Regal* Authority ſet up, ſhould then have ſaid in your Lordſhip's Words, *I can never underſtand, upon this bottom, what it was that could move or juſtify thoſe, who broke off from the Tyranny of the late King* James; *unleſs it was ſuf-*

ficient to ſay, that it was only that Power might change Hands.

I appeal to your Lordſhip, whether any thing could be more *extravagant* and *ſenſeleſs*, than ſuch a Declaration as this from a Friend to the *Revolution*.

And I as freely appeal to the *common Senſe* of every one, whether your *own Declaration* expreſſed in the *ſame* Words with regard to the *Reformation*, ſets you out to any better Advantage in relation to that.

For it is full as good Senſe to ſay, where is the *Juſtice* of the *Revolution*, or what *Foundation* has it in the Reaſon of Things, if there is ſtill a *King* to be acknowledged, and a *Regal Authority* to be ſubmitted to? as to call out for the *Juſtice*, and *Equity*, and *Reaſon* of the *Reformation*, if there is ſtill a *Church Authority* which we are obliged to obey. And it is as certainly the *Shame* and *Reproach* and *Injuſtice* of the *Revolution*, that a Government and *Regal* Authority is ſtill maintained, as it is the *Shame*, and *Reproach*, and *Injuſtice* of the *Reformation*, that a Church *Authority* is ſtill aſſerted.

And there was no more Neceſſity in the Nature or Reaſon of the Thing, that the *Reformation* ſhould diſown all *Authority* properly ſo called, in Matters of *Religion*, than that the *Revolution* ſhould have rejected all Authority properly ſo called in *Civil Affairs*.

Neither

Neither does the *Reformation* any more contradict itself, or undermine its own Foundation, and give the *Papists* an Advantage over it, by claiming and asserting a *Church Authority*, than the *Revolution* contradicted itself, or conspired its own Ruin, by setting up a *King*, and maintaining a *Government* in the State. And it had been just as *wise*, as *prudent*, and *politick* Management, if the *Revolution* had set up no Government, but left every Man to himself in *Civil Affairs*, in order to have prevented the Return of the late King *James*; as if the *Reformation* had maintained no Church Authority, but left every Person's Religion to himself, in order to keep out *Popery*. And it is just as much Matter of Joy and Triumph to the *Papists*, to see this Authority asserted in the Church of *England*, as it was Matter of Joy to the late King *James*, to find that a *Regal Authority* was set up against him.

But to go on; your Argument, when put in form, will proceed in this manner.

The Church of *England* departed from the Authority of the Church of *Rome*, therefore we may *lawfully* depart from any Church Authority. And again; at the *Reformation* we *lawfully* separated from the *Communion* of the *Church* of *Rome*, therefore we may as *lawfully* separate from any particular *Communion*.

And now, my Lord, can any Argument be more trifling, or draw more abſurd Conſequences after it, than this? And yet, abſurd as it is, it is one of your beſt, and which you ſeem to take great Delight in: Thus are we told in almoſt every Page, that if we will ſtand by the *Reaſon* and *Juſtice* of the *Reformation*, we muſt give up *all Authority* in Matters of Religion; and not pretend to a Neceſſity of being of any *particular* Church, if we would juſtify our leaving the *Romiſh* Church.

But pray, my Lord, you have told us, that the People of *England* of all *Stations* did *lawfully* and *honourably*, &c. reſiſt the late King *James*; but does it therefore follow, that they may as *lawfully* and *honourably* reſiſt King *George?* If not, how does it follow, that becauſe we might *juſtly* ſeparate from the Church of *Rome*, therefore others may as *juſtly* ſeparate from the Church of *England?*

Is it inconſiſtent with the Principles of the *Revolution* to declare Men *Rebels*, becauſe it was founded (as you affirm) upon Reſiſtance? If not, why muſt it be inconſiſtent with the Principles of the Church of *England*, to declare any People *Schiſmaticks*, becauſe ſhe ſeparated from the Church of *Rome?* Now if you will ſay that all who take *Arms* at *any* time againſt *any* King, are juſtified by thoſe, who took Arms againſt the late King *James*; then you would have ſome Pretence to make

our

our *Separation* from the Church of *Rome* a Juſtification of *every* other *Separation* in the World. But ſince you cannot ſay this, but have pretended to demonſtrate the contrary, that though ſometimes *Reſiſtance* is not *Rebellion*, yet ſometimes *Reſiſtance* certainly is *Rebellion*, you are particularly hard to the *Reformation*, to make it either unjuſtifiable in itſelf, or elſe to be a *Juſtification* of every other pretended *Reformation*.

But however, as hard as you are upon the *Reformation* in this Place, making it, conſidered as a *Separation*, a Defence of all other *Separations* from the Church of *England*; yet you your ſelf, to ſhew your equal regard to both ſides of a Contradiction, have aſſerted the contrary, and declared that as all *Reſiſtance is not Rebellion*, ſo neither *is all Separation Schiſm*.

Now, I ſuppoſe, when you ſay that *all Reſiſtance* is not *Rebellion*, it is certainly implied that *ſome Reſiſtance* may be *Rebellion*; and likewiſe by declaring in the *ſame* manner *all Separation* not to be *Schiſm*, it muſt as neceſſarily be implied that *ſome Separation* may be *Schiſm*. Here therefore you plainly teach us, that ſome *Separation* may be *Schiſm*, and ſome *Separation* may not be *Schiſm*; yet your preſent Argument is founded upon the contrary Suppoſition, that either all Separations are *Lawful*, or none

are *Lawful*; for it is the constant Complaint in every Chapter of your Book, that the Church of *England* should assert any Necessity or Obligation upon others of conforming to her, when she her self denied the Necessity of her conforming to the Church of *Rome*. So that the *Lawfulness* or *Justice* of her *Separation* from *Rome*, is urged to shew the equal *Lawfulness* and *Justice* of all *Separations* from the Church of *England*; which Argument is plainly founded upon this Proposition, that all Separations from any Churches, are either equally *Lawful*, or equally *Unlawful*. Which is directly contrary to this other Proposition, that some Separation may be *Schism*, and some Separation may not be *Schism*. Which Contradiction is just as palpable, as if you had said, all Resistance is not the Sin of Rebellion; yet all Resistance is either *equally* lawful, or *equally* unlawful.

But to go on, you say that *all* Resistance is not Rebellion, and for a Proof of it, say, that all *Church Separation* is not *Schism*; which plainly implies, that there is *at least* as much Difference betwixt some *Separations* from *different* Churches, as there is betwixt some armed *Resistances* against *different* Kings. Now if, according to your Lordship, there is as much Difference betwixt *Resistances*, as there is betwixt an Action that is a *Duty*, and an Action that is a *Sin*, and you have proved

proved this Difference, by comparing thoſe *Reſiſtances* to different ſorts of *Separations*, then it will neceſſarily follow that there may be, nay muſt be, as much Difference betwixt one *Separation* and another *Separation*, as there is betwixt one Action that is a *Duty*, and another Action that is a *Sin*. This being the true State of the Caſe, your Lordſhip's Argument in Defence of the *Separatiſts*, taken from our *Separation* from the Church of *Rome*, will ſtand thus.

We ſeparated from the Church of *Rome*, becauſe *ſuch Separation* was our *Duty*, therefore the *Fanatics* may ſeparate from the Church of *England*, though *ſuch Separation* is a *Sin:* Which is as rational an Argument, as if it ſhould be ſaid, ſuch a one killed a Man *lawfully*, therefore any one elſe may kill a Man *unlawfully*. For if ſome Separation may be a *Duty*, and ſome Separation a *Sin*, it is as falſe and ridiculous to infer, that if *our* Separation is juſt, it juſtifies *all other* Separations; as to conclude, that becauſe we may do our *Duty*, others may tranſgreſs their *Duty*. For there is manifeſtly, and from your own Acknowledgment, this great Difference between one Separation and another Separation, that one *Separation* in ſuch Circumſtances, will no more juſtify a Separation in other Circumſtances, than the Lawfulneſs of killing a Man in ſome Caſes, will prove it lawful to kill a Man in all other Caſes.

Now if your Lordſhip has any *Demonſtrations* ready, to ſhow that *Reſiſtance* in ſome Circumſtances is a *Chriſtian Duty*, and *Reſiſtance* in ſome other Circumſtances is a *damnable Sin*; and that it may be as great a Sin to reſiſt ſome Princes, as it is a Duty to reſiſt others; if you can help us to any plain Rule, any certain Signs to know an honeſt Chriſtian *Reſiſter*, from a *Reſiſter* who is a *Rebel* and in danger of *Damnation*; I hope there may be found as plain Rules to ſhew us who ſeparates *lawfully*, and who ſeparates *unlawfully* from any particular Church. If you can give any Reaſons why the late King *James* might be reſiſted *then*, and yet ſhow it a Sin to reſiſt King *George now*, it is ſomething ſtrange that you cannot find any Reaſons, why it was our *Duty* to ſeparate from the Church of *Rome then*, and yet ſhow it a *Sin* to ſeparate from the Church of *England now*.

For I would ſuppoſe at leaſt, that there is as much Difference between ſeparating from the Church of *England* and ſeparating from the Church of *Rome*, as there is betwixt Reſiſtance againſt a *good* King, and Reſiſtance againſt a *Tyrannical* Oppreſſor; and if there be this Difference, then you muſt allow, that it is as falſe to argue from the *Lawfulneſs* of ſeparating from one Church, to the *Lawfulneſs* of ſeparating from the other, as it would be to argue, that becauſe oppreſſive Tyrants

may

may be reſiſted, therefore juſt and good Kings may be reſiſted. I have been the longer in examining this Doctrine, in this particular View in relation to *Reſiſtance*, that it may be ſeen with how much Truth you ſay, you have *recommended ſuch Principles as ſerve to eſtabliſh the Intereſt of our common Country and our common Chriſtianity, of human Society and true Religion, upon one* uniform, ſteady, and conſiſtent Foundation *.

For it is evident that theſe Principles, if put in Practice, directly tend to the utter Ruin of our common Country, and our common Chriſtianity; for I have ſhewn that all the Arguments which you have advanced againſt Church Authority, if they have any Force, conclude with the ſame Force againſt all ſorts of Authority in the World.

I ſhall now proceed to a moſt remarkable evaſive Denial of every thing you have ſaid relating to Church Authority, from your own Mouth.

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* *Pref. to Com. Rights of Subjects.*

A Remarkable Evaſion of your Lordſhip's in relation to Church Authority.

THE *Learned Committee* charged your Lordſhip with *denying all Authority to the Church, and leaving it without any Authority to judge, cenſure, or puniſh Offenders in the Affairs of Conſcience and eternal Salvation* *. To ſupport this Charge, they quoted theſe Words of your Sermon; *Chriſt is ſole Law-giver to his Subjects, and himſelf ſole Judge of their Behaviour in the Affairs of Conſcience and Salvation; in theſe Points he hath left behind him no viſible human Authority.*

Now how is it that your Lordſhip has cleared your ſelf from this Charge? Why truly by declaring, that by a Denial of *all Church Authority*, you only meant to deny to the Governours of the Church a Power of paſſing the *irreverſible Sentence*, or that Chriſt has left no viſible Authority here to *judge* People at the laſt Day. When you talked ſo much of Church Authority in Matters of Religion, and of *an Authority left behind*, it was very reaſonable to think that

* *Repreſ.* p. 4.

you

you was ſpeaking of an Authority which related to the Church in this World. But it ſeems, all you have denied in relation to Church Authority, is only this, that any one but Chriſt ſhall *paſs the irreverſible Sentence*, or judge us at the laſt Day.

For you ſay; *As Chriſt is to paſs the irreverſible Sentence, thus he is judge alone.* And *what I affirm of him, I deny of others in the ſame Senſe in which I affirm it of him: And in no other Senſe can I be ſuppoſed to deny it, becauſe it anſwers no Purpoſe* *.

Therefore when you ſay no Men have any Authority in Affairs of *Religion* and *Conſcience*, you only ſay that no Men have Authority to paſs the *irreverſible Sentence* at the laſt Day. For you declare that thus it is that Chriſt alone is Judge, and you only deny that of others, which you affirm of him, and conſequently the only Authority which you deny them, is that of judging the World at the *laſt Day*.

Strange! my Lord, that after ſo many elaborate Pages for eccleſiaſtical Liberty, ſo many Complements received for your ſucceſsful Attacks upon *Church Authority*; that after all, you ſhould declare, that you have not ſo much as touched upon *Church Authority*, but have only been labouring to *demonſtrate*

* *Anſw. to Retr.* p. 33.

that

that the *Judgment of the laſt Day is commited to Chriſt alone.*

Chriſt, you ſay, *is in no other* Senſe *Judge of the Behaviour of Chriſtians in theſe Points, than as their Condition muſt and will be determined by his* Sentence. *And when I deny this of Men, I do not, I cannot, mean to deny this of them in any other Senſe, but that in which I affirm it of Chriſt* *.

So that when you in plain Words ſeem to deny all Authority in the Church, as by ſaying, that *Chriſt alone is Judge of the Behaviour of Chriſtians, in Matters of Religion*, and that he left behind him *no viſible human Authority in theſe Points*; and ſuch like Phraſes, as ſeem to ordinary Underſtandings to deny all *Rule* and *Authority* in the Church; you only mean, that *no* one but Chriſt is to paſs the *Sentence* at the laſt Day. This is the *Key* your Lordſhip has given us to your Writings, which indeed gives them quite another Face, and makes them ſuch a Courſe of *Amuſements*, as exceeds all which have yet been ſeen in that kind; as will appear from the following Particulars

Thus when you ſay, that *in the Affairs of Conſcience and Salvation, Chriſt hath left no viſible human Authority behind him.* The Meaning is this, that *Chriſt hath left no body behind him in this World, to paſs the*

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 46.

irre-

irreverſible Sentence in the next World, i. e. hath left no one to do that *here*, which cannot be done till *hereafter*. This is the *ſublimeſt* Senſe which this Paſſage is capable of, from your own Conſtruction.

Again, you ſay, the *Church of Chriſt is the Number of Perſons who are ſincerely and willingly Subjects to him as their Lawgiver and Judge* *; which according to this new *Key*, is to be thus underſtood; The *Church of Chriſt is the Number of Perſons who will ſincerely and willingly ſubmit to the Sentence of Chriſt at the laſt Day*. For you ſay, we are to ſubmit to him as our Judge; and you expreſsly ſay, he is *in no other Senſe judge of the Behaviour of Chriſtians*, than as he is to paſs the *irreverſible Sentence*; therefore if we are to be *willingly* and *ſincerely* ſubject to him *as Judge*, our Obedience or Subjection to him as Judge, can be no otherwiſe expreſſed, than by our Submiſſion to his Sentence then pronounced.

So that this Definition comes at laſt to ſignify a Number of Perſons, who ſincerely and willingly ſubmit, ſome to be ſaved, and ſome to be damned at the laſt Day; for this will be the Effect of Chriſt's Sentence as Judge.

This is as ſound Divinity, as if I ſhould define the Church of Chriſt, to be a *Number*

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* *Serm.* p. 25.

of

of Perſons, who ſincerely and willingly ſubmit, ſome to live, and ſome to die.

Again, you ſay, that *your Doctrines relating to the Authority of the Church*, is the very Foundation *on which the Church of* England *ſtands*; *and that they are ſo neceſſary for its continuance, that without them it is impoſſible to defend it's Cauſe againſt the* Roman *Catholicks*.

Now your Doctrine concerning Church Authority, you have over and over declared to be only this, *that Chriſt alone ſhall judge the World at the laſt Day*. For you expreſsly ſay, that you deny the Church an Authority of judging in *no other Senſe*, than in the Senſe in which you affirm it of Chriſt.

Now, my Lord, how comes this Doctrine to be the Support of the Church of *England?* How can it poſſibly have any relation to the Merits of the Cauſe? Does it follow that the *Pope* had no Legal Authority in *England*, that *Tranſubſtantiation* is falſe, that *Purgatory* is a groundleſs Fiction, and *Prayers* to Saints are unlawful, becauſe *Chriſt alone ſhall judge the World?* This is what you have affirmed of Chriſt, this is all which you have denied of Men; and this Doctrine it ſeems about *Church Authority*, as you are pleaſed to call it, is the *only Support* of the Church of *England*, and *the very Foundation on which it ſtands*,

A *Ro-*

A *Roman* Catholick tells me that *Tranſubſtantiation* is true; I anſwer him no, that cannot be, and that for this reaſon, becauſe no Order of Men ſhall judge us at the laſt Day; Chriſt alone ſhould do it. Could any thing be more extravagant, or more foreign to the Purpoſe, than ſuch an Anſwer as this to a *Roman* Catholick? And yet, according to your Account of the Matter, this is the only Anſwer which can be defended. For you have denied *no Authority* to the Church, but that which peculiarly belongs to Chriſt *as Judge at the laſt Day*; and yet you ſay that your Doctrine relating to Church Authority, is the very Foundation and Support of the *Reformation*.

Now if this Doctrine be our only Defence againſt the Church of *Rome*, and what alone ſupports us againſt that Church, then the *Preſbyterians*, the *Independents*, *Quakers*, and all ſorts of *Fanatics*, who own this Doctrine, that *Chriſt alone ſhall paſs the laſt Sentence*, are by it as well defended againſt the Church of *England*, as ſhe is againſt the Church of *Rome*; ſo that it makes us as much wrong in regard to the *Diſſenters*, as it makes us right in regard to the *Papiſts*; and though it ſhould give us *Victory* over the *Papiſts*, yet it makes us fall a Conqueſt to the *Fanatics*. For it is certainly as proper for a *Quaker* to reply to the *Church of England*, that his Reformation is juſtified againſt the

the Authority of the *Church* of *England*, becauſe Chriſt alone ſhall judge the World at the laſt Day; as for the Church of *England* to make that Anſwer to the Church of *Rome*.

Your Lordſhip ſays, for you to deny Church Authority in any other Senſe, *anſwers no Purpoſe*. Pray, my Lord, what Purpoſe does this manner of denying anſwer? Here is a Diſpute about Church Authority, and the Powers of Eccleſiaſtical Governours: Your Lordſhip interpoſes, and declares that no Men ſhall *paſs the irreverſible Sentence at the laſt Day*. To what Purpoſe, my Lord, is this Declaration? Does it ſtrike any Light into the Controverſy, or any way point out the Merits of the Cauſe? Does this inform us whether there is any ſuch thing as Church Authority, or where it is ſeated? If two *Families* were trying their Title to the ſame Eſtate, and the Judge ſhould pretend to determine the Matter, by ſaying that *God alone is ſole Proprietor of all Things*, it would be as much to the Purpoſe, as to tell us in the Controverſy about Church Authority, that *Chriſt alone ſhall judge the World*. Does this any way prove that there is no human Authority in the Church, or that Chriſtians are no way concerned with it? What an excellent Argument is this? *Chriſt alone* ſhall judge the World, therefore no Men have *any Authority* in Religion, therefore it can no way affect you

with

with regard to the Favour of God, whether you ſubmit or not, to ſuch human Authority?

Whether your Lordſhip is forced upon this Method of explaining your ſelf, by any other Motives than thoſe of Sincerity and Conviction, is what I ſhall not preſume to ſay; but I believe, if a Perſon ſhould be called to account for ſaying the *King* had no Right to *create Peers*, and ſhould afterwards defend himſelf, by ſaying that he only meant he could not *create* in that Senſe, in which *God alone* could create; I am apt to think ſuch a Defence would be no great Recommendation of his Sincerity. But, my Lord, it would be as proper and as ingenuous for a Perſon ſo accuſed to make ſuch a Defence, or rather ſuch an Eſcape, as for your Lordſhip, after the moſt expreſs repeated Denials of *all Church Authority*, to declare that you only meant to exclude it from paſſing the *irreverſible Sentence* at the laſt Day. And the Nature of Church Authority is as much ſettled and determined by this Declaration, as the King's Power in his Kingdom, as to the Creation of *Peers*, is declared by ſaying that *God alone* can create.

For is it any Argument that no Perſons have any particular Authority to baptize others, to admit to the holy Sacrament, and exclude unworthy Perſons from it, becauſe they are not to judge the World at the laſt Day? Is it a

Proof that Biſhops have no Authority to ordain, to confirm; no Commiſſion from God to take care of Religious Matters, and ſee that all Things in the Divine Service be done decently and in order, becauſe Chriſt alone is to paſs Judgment upon all at the laſt Day? Does it follow that Men are under no Church Authority, but may chuſe any Government, or no Government as they pleaſe, becauſe Chriſt alone ſhall call the World to Judgment? There is as much Logick in ſaying that *Jeſus Chriſt* ſuffered under *Pontius Pilate*, therefore Biſhops have no more Authority than Lay-men; as to ſay they have no Authority in Religious Affairs, becauſe Chriſt is to judge the World.

Yet you ſay this was the only proper Senſe in which you could be ſuppoſed to deny it. Now, my Lord, I ſhould have thought it had been more to the Purpoſe, to have denied Church Authority in ſome ſuch Senſe, as it had been falſely claimed by ſome body or other, that it might have been ſaid that you had an Adverſary ſome where or other. But in this Matter, you have not ſo much as an Adverſary in this World; for no one pretends to be Judge, as Chriſt is Judge, or ſets up the *Authority* of the Church in Oppoſition to the laſt *Tribunal*; yet this is the *only manner* of Judging, the *only ſort* of Authority, which you ſay you have denied to others; therefore you have only denied that which

which was never claimed; you have only denied that which no more relates to *Church Authority*, than it relates to Church *Muſic*. The *Pope* himſelf neither pretends to paſs Sentence at the laſt Day, nor that his Judgments here will have any Effect in the next World, but conditionally, that is, *Clave non errante*. Now this is not a Senſe in which Chriſt alone is Judge, therefore it is not a Senſe in which you have denied it to others. So that notwithſtanding this long elaborate Treatiſe againſt Church Tyranny and Popiſh Claims, *Popery* itſelf is as ſafe and ſound as ever it was. For you have denied this Power of Judging in *no other Senſe*, than as you have affirmed it of Chriſt, as he is to paſs the laſt *irreverſible* Sentence at the Day of Judgment; but the *Pope* does not claim it in that Senſe, therefore the *Papal Power* is untouched by your Lordſhip.

Here I muſt obſerve, how your Lordſhip has evaded the great Points in Diſpute, both concerning the *Nature* of the Church, and Church Authority. When you was charged with deſcribing the Church contrary to *Scripture* and the *Article* in the Church of *England*; your Anſwer was, that you had only deſcribed the *Inviſible Church*; which was ſaying in other Words, that in a Diſpute amongſt *Viſible Churches*, and about Church-Communion, you deſcribed a Church which had no relation to the Matter, nor ever can have

to any Diſpute amongſt Chriſtians. This, my Lord, to ſpeak tenderly of it, may be called only an *Evaſion*.

Again, as to Church Authority, your Lordſhip has been charged with denying it all, and leaving it no right to judge or cenſure in the Affairs of Conſcience. Your Anſwer is this, that you have only denied that Chriſt has left any Men here to judge us at the laſt Day. That is, in a Controverſy about the *Exiſtence* of Church Authority, the *Extent* and *Obligation* of its Laws, you have only denied ſuch an Authority as no body claims, nor ever will be executed, till *all Viſible* Churches, and Diſputes about them, will be at an end, *viz.* at the Day of Judgment.

This, my Lord, is another Evaſion, and that in the very chief Point in Diſpute, where Sincerity ſhould have obliged you to have been open, clear, and expreſs. But no ſooner are you touched upon this Point, but you fly into the Clouds, and the very Diſſenters themſelves loſe ſight of you.

Thus when you had plainly ſaid, that *Chriſt hath left behind him no viſible human Authority in the Affairs of Conſcience*, the Diſſenters might juſtly think they had nothing to be charged with for their Diſobedience to Biſhops; they might well think that they were left to any Government, or no Government in Religion, as they pleaſed, ſince Chriſt had left *no viſible human Authority*; but then how

how muſt they be aſtoniſhed, my Lord, to find that your Aſſertion about Church Authority, does not at all relate to the Church in *this World*, but to the Exerciſe of a certain Authority in the *next World*, after all Churches on the Earth are at an end? To find that you have denied no Authority to any Men, but that which peculiarly belongs to Chriſt at the laſt Day? That is, that you denied no Authority which ever was claimed either by *Proteſtant* or *Popiſh* Churches, or indeed which relates to the Church in this World?

Suppoſe, when his Majeſty was laſt at *Hanover*, any one ſhould have aſſerted, that the *Regency* had no Authority in Civil Matters; would the Regency have thought it any Excuſe, if he had ſaid that he only meant they were not the Governours of *Hanover?* Yet, my Lord, it would be as proper an Apology for him who had denied the Power of the Regency in *Great Britain*, to ſay he only meant they had not the ſupreme Power in *Hanover*, as for your Lordſhip, after a Denial of *all Viſible Church Authority* in this World, to ſay you only denied an Authority to paſs the irreverſible Sentence in the next World.

Thus has your Lordſhip left the Diſpute, and only pretended to deny that which no body ever claimed, *viz. that any Men have Authority to judge the World in Chriſt's ſtead, or paſs the irreverſible Sentence at the laſt Day.*

Your Lordſhip is here apprehenſive, that you ſhall be charged with *fighting without an Adverſary*, and therefore you point out ſeveral, and ſay, *I meant it againſt thoſe, who are ſo very free in declaring others of Chriſt's Subjects out of God's Favour; and in obliging Almighty God, to execute the Sentences of Men.*

There has been indeed, my Lord, a Number of Men, ever ſince Chriſtianity appeared in the World, who have been *very free* in declaring *Heretics* and *Schiſmatics* out of God's Favour, and who have maintained that theſe Heretics and Schiſmatics, when cenſured by the Church, cannot be received into God's Favour, but by their ſubmitting to, and returning to the Church. But now, if your Lordſhip means your Doctrine againſt theſe, you are ſtill *without an Adverſary*, and might as well mean it againſt no Body; for theſe Men never pretended to *judge others in Chriſt's ſtead, or to erect an Eccleſiaſtical Authority in Oppoſition to the Great Tribunal, which is the only Authority you pretend to deny.*

You go on? *If we had not ſuch amongſt Proteſtants*; yet it might be pardonable to guard *our People againſt the Preſumptions of the* Roman Catholicks; *who aſſume to themſelves that Power of Judgment, which Chriſt alone can have.*

Surely

Surely your Lordſhip muſt have ſo great an Averſion to Popery, that you never could ſo much as look into their Books; for otherwiſe I cannot conceive how you ſhould not know, that the *Roman* Catholicks pretended to no Power of Judging ſo as to affect People, but upon certain Conditions, as *Clave non errante*; but I ſuppoſe this is not a Power of Judging which belongs to our Saviour; *Clave non errante* has no Place in his Judgments. How then can your Lordſhip charge the *Papiſts* with aſſuming his Power, when that which they aſſume, cannot be aſcribed to him without Blaſphemy? So that, my Lord, it is juſt as pardonable to guard your People againſt theſe Preſumptions, as it is to alarm them with falſe and imaginary Dangers.

Again you ſay; *But how lately is it, that we have had People terrified with this very Preſumption, even by Proteſtants; and the Terms of Church Power, and the ſpiritual fatal Effects of Church Cenſures, made uſe of to frighten Men into a ſeparate Communion?*

My Lord, I ſhall not here enter into the Merits of that Controverſy, which your Lordſhip here points at; it being the Doctrine it ſelf which your Lordſhip blames, and not the Miſapplication of it. Thus you cenſure them, not becauſe they would draw People from a *true* Church to a *falſe* one, but becauſe they

pretend to frighten Men out of one Communion into another. This is your Lordſhip's heavy Charge againſt them, that they ſhould preſume to talk of the Differences of Communions, and prefer one Communion to another. So that whoever thinks any way of Worſhip to be dangerous, and endeavours to withdraw People from it, is here cenſured by your Lordſhip, as pretending to judge in Chriſt's ſtead, and ſetting up an Authority in Oppoſition to the laſt Day.

Your Lordſhip ſaith, it is with this *very Preſumption (viz.* that they can paſs the irreverſible Sentence) *that theſe Men have endeavoured to frighten People into a ſeparate Communion.* If I ſhould ſay, that it is upon *Preſumption* that Chriſt never appeared in the World, that your Lordſhip has delivered your late Doctrines, I ſhould freely ſubmit to the Charge of Calumny; and I am ſure your Lordſhip has ventured as far, in ſaying that it was with *this very Preſumption* that theſe Men delivered ſuch Doctrines. And your Lordſhip has as much reaſon to charge them with *Atheiſm*, as with this *very Preſumption*; for they no more preſume *to judge in Chriſt's ſtead*, or paſs the *irreverſible Sentence*, than they preſume there is no God.

Your Lordſhip has ſtill, it ſeems, another Adverſary, a late Writer (the Dean of *Chicheſter*) *who has ſpoken unwarily of the Effects of the ſpiritual Puniſhments, the*

the Church inflicts, being generally suspended till the Offender comes into the other World *.

This first Censure is very modest, carrying it no farther than an *unwary* Expression; but presently the Charge advances; *and*, you say, *if it be thus, you confess you think the Condition of Christians much worse than the Condition in which St.* Paul *describes the Heathens, who are left to their own Consciences and the righteous Judgment of God.* So that at last it comes to this, that the Dean has taught such Doctrine, as makes it more desirable to be a *Heathen* than a *Christian.*

Let us therefore try how this Charge is supported: The *Dean* has said, *the Effects of spiritual Punishments are generally suspended till the Offender* comes into another World †; therefore, says your Lordship, *the Condition of Christians is much worse than that of Heathens*, and the Reason is this, *because Heathens are left to their own Consciences and the righteous Judgment of God*; so that if spiritual Punishments signify any thing to Offenders in the other World, or *have any Effect there*, then such People are in your Lordship's Judgment, not *left to their own Consciences and the righteous Judgment of God.*

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* *Answ. to Repr.* p. 35. † *Serm.* p. 8.

Pray,

Pray, my Lord, how does it follow that if ſpiritual Puniſhments have any Effect in *the other World*, that then Offenders *are not left to the righteous Judgment of God?*

Is it an Argument that People are not *left to the righteous Judgment of God*, becauſe they are to be puniſhed in the other World? Or is it an Argument that they are excluded from God's righteous Judgment, becauſe they are not puniſhed till they come thither? I ſhould have thought it a plain Argument for the direct contrary, and that one could not give a ſtronger Proof that ſuch Offenders were left *to the righteous Judgment of God*, than by ſaying that the Effects of ſuch Puniſhments are not felt till the Offender comes into the other World; I ſhould have thought this a manifeſt Declaration that the Offender was to fall to the *righteous Judgment of God*, ſince he was not to feel any Puniſhment till he was fallen into God's Hands. If the *Dean* had intended to teach that Church Puniſhments have no Effect, but ſuch as the *righteous Judgment of God* gives them, how could he have better ſignified his Intention, than by declaring, that *the Effects of ſuch Puniſhments are generally ſuſpended till the Offender comes into the other World?* How could the *Dean* more expreſsly guard againſt any horrible Apprehenſions of Church Cenſures, or more directly refer the Cauſe to God, than he has done here? His Words

are

are a plain Declaration, that ſuch Offenders muſt fall to the *righteous Judgment of God*, ſince they are to fall into his Hands before they feel the Effects of ſuch Puniſhment.

If any diſcontented Offender againſt the *Church* ſhould tell me, that if the Cenſures of the Church can ſignify any thing to him, he ſhould be glad to be a *Heathen*, and have his Fate amongſt them; would it not be ſufficient Matter of Satisfaction to tell him, that theſe Puniſhments will have no Effect but in the other World, where there can be no Injuſtice; and that it is the ſame God who judges the Heathens, who will judge Chriſtians?

Yet this Declaration, which is the only Ground for Satisfaction to Men of Conſcience, under the Cenſures of the Church, is by your Lordſhip pretended to be ſuch an Evil, as to make us rather reſign our Chriſtianity, than ſubmit to it. This is all which the *Dean* has ſaid to make it more deſirable to be a *Heathen* than a *Chriſtian*.

Suppoſe, my Lord, the Matter had been worded ſtronger, and inſtead of ſaying that the *Effects of ſpiritual Puniſhments are generally ſuſpended till the Offenders come into the other World*, it had been ſaid, *the ſpiritual Cenſures* of the Church ſhall *riſe in the Judgment and condemn Offenders*. If it had been thus expreſſed, what Complaints might you not have made againſt ſuch *unwary* Expreſſions? What Cruelties and Hard-

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ſhips might you not have charged on ſuch Doctrine? And how advantagiouſly might you have compared the Felicity of *Heathenism* to ſuch *Chriſtianity?*

But, my Lord, that *Divine Perſon* who has reſerved to himſelf the righteous Judgment of the World, has yet declared to a certain *Generation*, that the Men of *Nineveh* ſhall *riſe up in the Judgment with them and condemn them, becauſe thoſe repented at the preaching of* Jonas, *but theſe did not, though a greater than* Jonas *was with them* *.

Now, my Lord, here lies the ſame Objection againſt this Doctrine, which there does againſt the *Dean*'s. For is it not full as hard that the *Repentance* of the Men of *Nineveh*, or any where elſe, ſhould have any Effect upon the Impenitent at the Day of Judgment, as that the *Cenſures* of the Church ſhould have any Effect upon Offenders in the other World? Is it not as cruel that the Impenitent ſhall have their Guilt aggravated by other People's *preaching* or *Repentance*, as by other People's *Cenſures?* And would it not be as proper here to ſay, if this be ſo, happy they who never heard of *Preaching* or *Repentance*, as to ſet forth the Happineſs of *Heathens*, becauſe they are free from *Church Cenſures?* If the *Sentence* of the Church will riſe in Judgment and condemn Offenders,

* *Matth.* 12. 41.

then

then you ſay ſuch Perſons do not fall to the righteous Judgment of God. But is not this as true of the Men of *Nineveh*, that if they ſhall riſe up in Judgment and condemn the Impenitent, that then ſuch Perſons are not left to the *righteous Judgment of God?*

So that had you been one of our Saviour's Hearers, you muſt have been as much aſtoniſhed at his Doctrine, as at the Dean's *unwary Expreſſion*, and have been obliged to ſay then, as you have ſaid now, *that you have ſuch Notions of the Goodneſs of God, and of his gracious Deſigns in the Goſpel, that you think it your Duty to declare your Judgment, that the Suppoſition is greatly injurious to the Honour of God and of the Goſpel, and the thing itſelf impoſſible to be conceived* *.

Your Lordſhip has here only advanced this Argument againſt the *Significancy* of Church *Cenſures*, but any one elſe may as juſtly, and to as much Purpoſe urge it againſt every Part of Chriſtianity.

Thus it may ſerve to prove that it would be better never to have had the Scriptures; for if any Texts of Scripture ſhall riſe in Judgment and condemn thoſe who diſbelieved them, or diſregarded their Doctrine, then it may be ſaid, much happier are the Heathens, who have nothing of this to fear from any

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* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 36.

Scriptures,

Scriptures, but are left to their own *Conſciences and the righteous Judgment of God.*

Again; As this Argument proves even the Scriptures to be an Unhappineſs, ſo will it prove every Advantage in human Life to be a Miſery.

For it is certain that the *Examples* of religious Men, the good *Advice* of our *Friends*, and the virtuous *Commands* of our *Parents* and *Governours*, will, if neglected, *affect* our Condition; and though, like the ſpiritual *Corrections* of the Church, they may not be felt here, yet hereafter they will riſe in Judgment and condemn us. May I not here ſay with your Lordſhip, *if the Caſe be thus*; if other People's *Wiſdom*, *Virtue*, *Advice* or *Commands*, can affect our *State* in the next World, then more happy are thoſe who never ſaw a *good* or *wiſe* Man in their Lives, and who have nothing to fear from the *Advice* or *Commands* of any, but *are left to their own Conſciences and the righteous Judgment of God.*

So that you cannot condemn the *Dean*'s Doctrine as *horrible*, without condemning it as an *horrible* thing, that the Men of *Nineveh* ſhould riſe in Judgment and condemn the impenitent *Jews*; or an *horrible* thing that the *Light* of the *Goſpel*, the *Bleſſings* of Chriſtianity, and the *Advantages* of Education, ſhould have *any Effect* in the next World upon thoſe, who deſpiſed them in this World.

Of

Of the Authority of the Church, as it relates to Excommunication.

IN order to vindicate this Doctrine thoroughly, and ſhew upon what bottom it is founded, I ſhall, as briefly as I can, ſtate the *Nature* and *Intent* of ſpiritual Puniſhments, and ſhew what Effects they have upon Offenders in the other World; from whence, I perſuade myſelf, it will farther appear, that ſuch Effects do no more exclude Perſons from the righteous Judgment of God, than the Heathens are excluded from his righteous Judgment.

Now that corrupt Members may be cut off from Chriſtian Communion, till by their Amendment they recommend themſelves to a Re-admiſſion, is plain from Scripture. This is even granted by your Lordſhip, that *Chriſtians may ſet a Mark upon* Notorious Offenders, *even by refuſing to them the peculiar Tokens and Marks of Chriſtian Communion, as well as by avoiding their Company and Converſation* *. But then your Lordſhip makes no more of it, *than a Right which all Chriſtians have to avoid an open, wilful, and*

* P. 39.

ſcanda-

ſcandalous Sinner *; ſo that *this Excommunication, conſidered as a Church Act*, is only the ſame Power in a Body or Society, of avoiding Perſons they abhor; which is the common Privilege of every ſingle Perſon, whether in or out of the Church, to ſhun thoſe he diſlikes.

And all the Excommunication you allow, is this, that as private Perſons have a Right to ſhun and avoid thoſe they diſlike, ſo the Church may exclude ſuch Members as are diſapproved of; and that this judging, or excommunicating, is a Right equally inveſted in all Chriſtians, and entirely without any Effect upon the Perſon excommunicated, ſo as to make his Condition either better or worſe before God.

I ſhall therefore, my Lord, beg leave to ſhow that the Power of Excommunication, is a *Judicial Power*, which belongs to particular Perſons, which they have a Right to exerciſe from the Authority of Chriſt; and that Perſons ſo excommunicated, are not to be looked upon as Perſons who are only to be abhorred and avoided by Chriſtians, as any Man may avoid thoſe he diſlikes, but as Perſons who are to be avoided by Chriſtians, becauſe they lie under the *Sentence* of God, and are by his *Authority* turned out of his Kingdom.

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* P. 43.

That

That Excommunication is a Power which belongs only to particular Perſons, will appear from the Nature of the Thing itſelf, as it is an Excluſion of Perſons from the Chriſtian Worſhip: for as only particular Men can *officiate* in the Chriſtian Worſhip, and admit People into Communion; ſo only thoſe Perſons can refuſe the Sacrament, and exclude Offenders from Communion. Nothing can be more plain, then that thoſe who can alone adminiſter the Sacrament, can alone exclude Men from it.

All Perſons are admitted conditionally into the Chriſtian Covenant, and have only a Title to the Benefits of it, or the ordinary Means of Grace, as they perform the Conditions of their Admiſſion; and thoſe ſame Perſons who have alone the Authority to admit them into the Church upon thoſe Conditions, have alone the Authority to exclude them for Non-performance. And their Act of Excluſion is *as effectual* towards the taking from them all the Privileges of Chriſtians, and as truly makes them *Aliens* from the Kingdom of God, as their Act of Admiſſion at firſt entitled them to all the Benefits of Church-Communion. For as they have as much Authority to exclude ſome, as they have to admit others into the Church, the Authority being the ſame in both Caſes, it muſt be in both Caſes *equally* effectual.

If your Lordſhip will ſay that all People, are equally qualified to admit Perſons into the Church, that, *Go ye, and baptiſe all Nations,* conferred the ſame Powers on all Chriſtians; then indeed it muſt be granted that Excommunication, or Excluſion from the Church, is a Right equally inveſted in all Chriſtians. But as ſure as Chriſt gave peculiar Powers to his Apoſtles, as ſure as they left particular Men to ſucceed them in their Powers, ſo ſure is it that only ſuch Succeſſors can either admit or exclude Perſons from Chriſtian Communion.

Secondly; That Excommunication belongs to particular Perſons, will appear from the Inſtitution of it in Scripture.

If thy Brother ſhall treſpaſs againſt thee, go and tell him his Fault between thee and him alone. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more. And if he ſhall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen Man, and a Publican. Verily I ſay unto you, whatſoever ye ſhall bind on Earth, ſhall be bound in Heaven; and whatſoever ye ſhall looſe on Earth, ſhall be looſed in Heaven *.

Here, my Lord, is as plain an Inſtitution of *Excommunication,* as can well be con-

* *Matth.* 18. 15.

ceived;

ceived; and he who can doubt of it, may doubt whether Baptiſm be inſtituted in Scripture.

Firſt, We may obſerve that here is an Authority given to the Church over the Offender, and that *ſuch* an Authority, as neither belonged to private Men, either ſeperate or united together; for the Offender here had firſt been admoniſhed, by a ſingle Perſon, then by *one or two more*, *i. e.* an indefinite Number, but ſtill here is nothing granted but Admonition; but as ſoon as he is brought before the Church, there an Authority appears, and the Offender is to feel its Sentence, *let him be unto thee as an Heathen.*

Secondly; That this Authority did not belong to the Church, conſidered *only* as a greater Number of Chriſtians, but as it ſignified particular Perſons who had this Authority from Chriſt, for the Edification of his Church.

For Chriſt expreſsly declares in the following Verſe, that *where two or three are met together in his Name, there is He in the midſt of them.*

Here is the Deſcription of that Church before whom the Offender was to be brought, and whoſe Authority Chriſt promiſes to ſupport; it is *two or three met together in his Name.*

Now the Church had not this Authority over the Offender, conſidered as a *Number*, *i. e.* as two or three; for we ſee that the Offender had been already before *ſuch* a Church; he had been before *two or thee*; and after Neglect of them, he was brought before another *two or three*, met together *in Chriſt's Name*. Which is a plain Proof that the Offender was not cenſured by the Church, as it ſignifies a Number of Chriſtians, but as it implies particular Perſons acting in the *Name* of Chriſt, and with *his Authority*.

Thirdly; We may obſerve that the Authority here granted to the Church is a *Judicial Authority*, ſuch an Authority as *affects* and *alters* the *Condition* of the Perſon excommunicated, implied in theſe Words, *Let him be unto thee as an Heathen*; *that is*, as the Biſhop of *Oxford* obſerves, *in the moſt natural and common Senſe of the Words, they ſhould look upon him no longer as a Member of the Church, but place him amongſt Infidels* *; and again, *as reduced into the State of Heathens* †.

Now unleſs it can be ſaid, that a Perſon who is turned out of the Kingdom of God, and reduced into the State of Heathens, is in the ſame Condition which he was, when he was in the Church, and had a Right to all the Benefits of Communion; unleſs we can

* *Chur. Gov.* p. 351. † *Ibid.* p. 356.

ſay

ſay that a Perſon thus rejected from the Means of Grace, by the *Commiſſion* of Chriſt, is in the ſame Condition with him, who is continued in the Church by the *ſame Commiſſion* of Chriſt; it muſt be allowed that here is a *Judicial* Power granted to the Church, and ſuch as affects the Condition of the Offender in the Sight of God.

Fourthly; It is to be obſerved, that this Authority of the Church is made *Judicial* by the expreſs Promiſe of God to ratify and confirm it. For after it is ſaid, *let him be unto thee as an Heathen*, it is declared, that *whatſoever they ſhould* thus *bind on Earth, ſhould be bound in Heaven.*

From all this, it plainly appears, that Excommunication is as truly a Divine *Poſitive Puniſhment*, as Baptiſm is a Divine *Poſitive Bleſſing*; and that the one as certainly *excludes* us from the Kingdom of God, as the other *admits* us into it. For ſince here is as plainly Chriſt's *expreſs Authority* to take from ſome Men the ordinary Means of Grace, and exclude them from the common Benefits of Chriſtianity, as there is his Authority *to go and baptiſe all Nations*; I deſire to know, why one is not as truly a Divine *Poſitive Inſtitution* as the other? Is not Chriſt's Authority as effectual and ſignificant in excluding, as in admitting Perſons into his Kingdom? Is not that ſame Power as able to take away the Privileges of Church-Mem-

berſhip, as it was at firſt to grant them?

If therefore there be any Bleſſing or Happineſs in our being admitted into the Church; there muſt be as much Miſery and Puniſhment in our *Excluſion* from it. For as it implies the Loſs of all thoſe Privileges and Favours we were made Partakers of, by our Admiſſion into the Church; ſo we muſt needs be puniſhed in the ſame degree that we were happy.

If therefore *Baptiſm*, a Divine *Poſitive Inſtitution* to admit us into the Privileges of Chriſtianity, makes any Alteration in our Condition, as to the Favour of God, *i. e.* if we are brought any nearer to God by Baptiſm, than we were before; then it plainly follows, *Excommunication*, a Divine *Poſitive Inſtitution*, which deprives us of all theſe Privileges of Chriſtianity, and, as the Biſhop of *Oxford* expreſſes it, *reduces* Offenders *into the State of Heathens*, muſt needs affect our Condition with regard to the Favour of God.

For if there be any thing in Baptiſm which is juſt Matter of Joy, there is ſomething equally Terrible in Excommunication; which, when rightly executed, as effectually makes us Aliens from the Promiſes of God, as Baptiſm, when rightly adminiſtered, makes us Children of God, and Heirs of eternal Life. So that he who can ridicule and expoſe the *Terrors* and *Effects* of Excommunication, is

acting

acting juſt as Chriſtian a part, as he who derides and deſpiſes the Benefits and Advantages of *Baptiſm.*

Seeing therefore the Church hath as expreſs an Authority to turn ſome Men out of the Church, as it hath to admit others into it, it is as falſe an Account of *Excommunication*, to make it only that *common Right* which every Man has, to avoid thoſe he diſlikes; as if it ſhould be ſaid, that *Admiſſion* into the Church by Baptiſm, implies no more, than that *common Right* which every Man has to do good Offices for thoſe he likes. Now, my Lord, is Baptiſm to be adminiſtered, becauſe Perſons may do good Offices for one another? Is there a Power in the Church to encreaſe its Members, by admitting others into Communion, for this reaſon, becauſe People have a common Right to chuſe their Company? If not, my Lord, how comes the Excluſion of Members to be nothing but a *common Right* of avoiding thoſe we diſlike? Are not Perſons excluded from all the Benefits of their Admiſſion? So that if there was any Authority required for the Admiſſion of Perſons into the Church, if this Authority was only from God, it is certain that an Excluſion from theſe Church-Privileges, cannot be executed but by the ſame Authority, which firſt granted them. For no Perſon can be deprived of any Privileges, but by that Power which at firſt granted them.

When therefore your Lordſhip recurs to the *common Right* of Perſons to avoid, if they can, thoſe they diſlike, in order to ſtate the Nature of Excommunication; it is juſt as much to the Purpoſe, as if I ſhould get a *Chymiſt* to examine the natural Qualities of Water, in order to ſtate the true Efficacy of *Baptiſm*: for Men no more act by any Powers of their own when they exclude Offenders, than they baptize others into Communion by their own Authority, or than Water unites them to Chriſt by its natural Qualities.

Yet your Lordſhip ſets forth the Nature of Excommunication, and the Right the Church has to it, only from that *common Right, which all Chriſtians have of avoiding if they can thoſe they diſlike* Thus you ſay, the Church may excommunicate, becauſe *every Perſon has a Right to judge, nay he cannot help judging of the Behaviour of Men* *; that *every Man will judge him to be a Murtherer, who takes away his Neighbour's Life unjuſtly.*

This comes up as truly to the Nature of Excommunication, and is as juſt an Account of it, as if any one ſhould ſet forth the Authority of a Britiſh *Judge*, and ſhow the Extent of his *Judicial* Power, by ſaying, he indeed may judge and condemn a *Murtherer*,

* P. 39.

for

for this is the Right of every Perſon to judge, *and no one can help judging and condemning a Murtherer.* It is as conſiſtent with Senſe, thus to ſet out the Power of the Judge, as it is with Reaſon and Scripture, to compare Excommunication to that private Power of *Judging* and *Thinking* which every one enjoys.

For, my Lord, can it be ſuppoſed that when our Saviour tells them, that they ſhould reject ſuch a Perſon out of the Church, and look upon him as an Heathen, and that he would bind, *i. e.* confirm their Sentence; can it be ſuppoſed, that he only meant they might *think* and *judge* a wicked Perſon to be a wicked Perſon, only in ſuch a manner as every Man cannot help Thinking and Judging? If our bleſſed Lord only here intended this, what occaſion was there for his Promiſe to ratify their Judgment? What need is there of an Aſſurance, that they ſhall privately judge, what they cannot help privately judging? Or indeed to what Purpoſe is any Promiſe at all made here, if nothing is to be effected? If this Sentence be only a private, unauthorized Declaration, like the Opinion or Judgment of private Men, what Room can there be for this Ratification of our Saviour? If no Effects are intended in the *Judgment* of the Church, what can be the meaning of this Promiſe? Or rather, ſince our Saviour has here inſtituted the Authority, and promiſed

miſed to ratify the Exerciſe of it, how dares any Chriſtian to compare it to a private perſonal Power of Judging, or declare that it is without any Effect upon the Condition of Chriſtians? For, my Lord, either ſomething is here promiſed to the Sentence of the Church, or there is not; if there is ſomething promiſed, then the Sentence of the Church is no more like the perſonal Sentence of private Men, than the Power of a Judge is like the Power of a private Man; if you will ſay there is nothing here promiſed in theſe Words, *whatſoever ye ſhall bind on Earth, ſhall be bound in Heaven*, &c. then you muſt ſay that there is nothing at all meant in them; for it is impoſſible to ſhew that they can have any other Meaning, than that of a Promiſe; ſo that if no Promiſe is made, they are certainly ſo many dead Letters.

Again; That this is a *Judicial* Power, is alſo evident from the Caſe of the inceſtuous *Corinthian*. St. *Paul* ſays, *What have I to do, to judge them alſo which are without?* Now the Apoſtle could not have put this Queſtion, if by Judging here had been meant no Authority, but a private Power of judging and thinking a Sinner to be a Sinner. For a Man can no more help judging a Murtherer to be a Murtherer, which is without the Church, than if he were within the Church. And it is as proper for us to judge and think aright of thoſe who are out of the Church,

as of those who are within it. So that St. *Paul* could not mean, What have I to do to think a *Murtherer* to be a *Murtherer* which is without the Church, it being every Man's Duty to think as truly of all Things and Persons as he can? Seeing therefore he plainly intimates that he had a Power of Judging in the Church, which did not belong to him out of the Church, it follows that this Power was *Judicial* and *Authoritative*; for a private Power of Judging and Thinking, belongs to every Man with regard to every Thing.

We shall more easily understand what is meant by the *Effects* of spiritual Punishments, if we consider them under this Division.

First, Such as are the primary and intended Effects; secondly, Such as are only the *accidental* Effects of them.

Now as to the primary and intended Effects of spiritual Punishments, they are these.

First, To preserve the Honour of God and his Church, that ill Members being cut off, it might be *presented a glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it might be Holy, and without Blemish* *.

Secondly, To reform Offendors, and reclaim them from their Vices; it is a Discipline given to the Church for the Edification, and not the Destruction of its Members.

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* Ephes. 4. 25.

Thus

Thus St. *Paul* says, the incestuous *Corinthian* was to be *delivered over to Satan, for the Destruction of the Flesh, that his Spirit might be saved in the Day of the Lord* *.

Thirdly, To preserve the rest of the Church from the ill Influence of their Example, and that by such Punishments exercised upon others, they might fear, and learn from thence not to offend.

These are the intended Effects of the Punishments which the Church inflicts, to preserve it a Holy Society, and save the Souls of its Members.

God Almighty has instituted several Means for the Advancement of Virtue, and the Salvation of Mankind; and amongst others, he has set up this Authority of the Church to promote the same Ends. It is his *human, ordinary* Means for the Preservation of his Church; and therefore as it cannot operate infallibly, or affect People with a Divine Certainty, it is only conditional, and is to prevail towards the Salvation of Mankind, as far as human and conditional Means can prevail.

And indeed, it is an Institution which has a very natural Tendency to produce the Effects designed by it. For, considering Christianity as a Covenant with God, wherein our Title to Happiness depends upon our Use of

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* 1 *Cor.* 5. 5.

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the ordinary inſtituted Means of Grace, nothing can more naturally induce us to live worthy of ſuch Means, than this Authority in the Church to withdraw them upon our Abuſe, and expel us from the Terms of the Covenant. Men would not dare to tranſgreſs, when they ſaw they could neither break the Laws, nor corrupt the Faith of Chriſtianity, without being turned out of the Church, by ſuch a Power as Chriſt hath ſet up for that Purpoſe, and with his Promiſe to make good its Decrees. They muſt be very obſtinate Sinners, who could be content to lie under a Sentence, which as effectually takes from them all Pretenſion to Chriſtian Happineſs, as their Baptiſm entitled them to thoſe Pretenſions at firſt.

The chief Reaſon why Sinners are generally ſo little affected with the Horror of their Condition, is becauſe they look upon their Puniſhment at the future Judgment, as a great Diſtance off; and ſince they are within the Church, and enjoy the ordinary Means of Grace, they think they can repent in time. But now Chriſt, by inſtituting this Church Authority, has ſuited his Diſcipline to the Weakneſs and Frailty of our Nature; and they who are only to be affected with Things preſent, have a preſent Judgment to fear; which, though it is only the Judgment of Men, yet is the Judgment of ſuch Men as are commiſſioned to pronounce it in Chriſt's Name,

Name, and with his Promiſe to ratify and confirm it. So that they have as much reaſon to look upon themſelves as effectually caſt out by God in that Sentence, as they were received into Covenant with God by Baptiſm; for there is the ſame Divine Authority to ſupport them both.

As to thoſe other *Effects* of ſpiritual Puniſhments in the other World, they are not the intended, but *accidental* Effects of ſuch Puniſhments, which are brought upon Offenders by their own wicked Behaviour under them.

Thus the Salvation of Mankind is the primary *intended Effect* of Chriſtianity; yet it may have ſuch Effect upon ſome Men by their own Impiety in it, as to make it better for them if they had never heard of the Name of Chriſt. For Chriſtianity may become ſo much a Puniſhment to ſome Perſons in the other World, that their Condition may be leſs tolerable than that of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*. But then this is not the intended Effect of Chriſtianity, but an accidental Effect which ſuch Perſons bring upon themſelves; who by their own ill Conduct turn a Mercy into a Judgment, and make that which was intended to ſave them, the accidental Cauſe of their greater Ruin.

Thus it is with ſpiritual Puniſhments; they are the merciful Corrections of God intended to prevent our future Miſery, but if diſregarded,

garded, will certainly increaſe it. This will eaſily explain what is meant by the *Effects* of ſpiritual Puniſhments in the other World, or how *they are ſuſpended till the Offender comes thither*. It is not the direct intended Effect of Church Puniſhments to encreaſe the Miſery of Sinners, or damn them in the other World; no more than it is the direct intended Effect of Chriſtianity to increaſe People's Damnation: But as Chriſtianity, if abuſed, will be the accidental Cauſe of their greater Damnation who ſo abuſe it; ſo the Cenſures of the Church, when deſpiſed, will have this accidental Effect, as to increaſe the Puniſhment of thoſe who ſo deſpiſed them. This is the Nature of thoſe Effects, which ſpiritual Puniſhments will have upon the Impenitent in another World.

As for Inſtance, a Perſon who is turned out of the Church, may all this while be luſty and ſtrong, and flouriſh in all the Advantages of this Life; but when he comes into the other World, he may then find that the ſpiritual Puniſhment was a ſore Evil, that it is ratified by Chriſt, has increaſed his Guilt, and will be Matter of Puniſhment hereafter.

He will then find that the Cenſure of the Church has increaſed his Guilt in theſe Reſpects.

Firſt, As it was a *Judicial Sentence* pronounced by Chriſt's Authority, and therefore not to be deſpiſed or neglected without great Impiety;

Impiety; so that let the Sinner have been what he will before, when he continues in his Sins in Contempt of *this Tribunal* set up in Christ's Name, his Guilt is thereby exceedingly increased.

Secondly, As it is the *most powerful Means*, and the very utmost which God can do to reclaim, or even terrify Sinners from their Impiety; as it is the most awakening Call to Repentance, an Institution only less terrible than the last Judgment; those who are not affected with it, must be rendered more odious in the Sight of God, and made ripe for a severer Punishment.

These, my Lord, are the Effects of spiritual Punishments in the other World; it is thus that they alter the Condition of Offenders in the Sight of God in regard to his Favour. They are certainly under greater Displeasure, after they have despised the Censures of Church Authority, and have resisted an *Institution*, which is the last possible Means to recover them.

In former Times, God has been pleased to send his *Prophets* to forewarn Sinners of their Destruction, as *Jonah* to the Men of *Nineveh*: But in the Christian Dispensation, he governs us by his ordinary Providence; and though he does not send express Messengers to recal Sinners, yet he has instituted a *standing Authority* in his Church, to censure Offenders, and give them up to Destruction in his Name,

Name, unleſs they immediately repent. And what can we think more dreadful than a *Sentence* thus pronounced againſt us by God's Authority, and with his Promiſe to confirm it?

Was there any thing more awakening or more dreadful in the Preaching of *Jonah*, than in this Declaration? *Jonah* could only preach and declare, he could execute nothing himſelf; it was his being ſent in *God's Name*, which created all the Terror, and was the Motive to Repentance. Now though the Church can *only* cenſure and declare, yet ſince it is as truly commiſſioned to cenſure in *God's Name*, as *Jonah* was ſent in *God's Name*, there is as much reaſon to dread the Conſequences of neglecting the Church, as of not repenting at the Meſſage or Preaching of any Prophet from God.

I muſt now beg leave here, my Lord, *to lament an Aſſertion from the Hands of a Chriſtian and Proteſtant Biſhop*; where you declare, that the *Excommunication of the inceſtuous* Corinthian, *neither added to God's Diſpleaſure, nor would the want of it have at all diminiſhed it. Neither if he had dyed in an impenitent Condition, would that Sentence have had any Effect in the other World* *.

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 38.

This, my Lord, plainly ſuppoſes that there is neither *Authority* nor *Advantage* in Excommunication; for if there were, it is certain that our *Abuſe* of it as an *Advantage*, and our Contempt of it as an *Authority*, muſt needs increaſe our Guilt, and conſequently God's Diſpleaſure. Yet your Lordſhip here teaches the World, that if the inceſtuous *Corinthian*, *though juſtly cenſured*, and that by an Apoſtle directing, and the whole Congregation joining, had died impenitent, *that Sentence would have had no Effect in the other World.*

Let us therefore ſuppoſe that ſome great Patron of Chriſtian Liberty had gone to the diſconſolate *Corinthian*, ſorrowing under the Sentence of the Church, and endeavoured to quiet him after this manner.

" Why do you diſquiet your ſelf with vain " Fears about the Cenſure of the Church, " which neither hath nor can have an Effect " upon your Condition as to the Favour of " God. Let the Apoſtle and Church be as " ſolemn as they pleaſe in the Denunciation; " let them in the Name of Chriſt deliver you " over to *Satan*; yet take Courage, and fear " nothing from all this; for you may de- " pend upon it, that, after all, you are but " juſt where you was, before this Sentence " was paſſed. And if you die impenitent, " you have no Effects of this Cenſure to fear " in the other World.

Now

Now this is the Doctrine your Lordship has taught for the Consolation of those who are, or are likely to be under the Sentence of the Church; which if it be now found Doctrine, it was as proper to be told the *Corinthian* then, as it is for your Lordship to teach it now. And if your Lordship had lived then, it would have been as proper to have told the *Corinthian*, as to tell us now; and you must have lain under the same Christian Necessity of delivering him from vain Fears, which now constrains you to set all at liberty from the like Apprehensions.

St. *Paul*, speaking of the Sentence passed upon the *Corinthian*, says, *Sufficient to such a Man was this Punishment* *. Now, my Lord, if it have nothing of the Nature of a Punishment, if it has no Effect where it is inflicted, if the Person said to be punished can feel no Effect from it, what strange Language is this? Can that be called a Punishment, or a sufficient Punishment, which can in no degree be felt, which produces no Effects, or makes no Alteration in the Person where it falls?

Again St. *Paul* tells us, that he had amongst others which had corrupted the Faith, *delivered Hymeneus and Alexander to Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme* †.

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* 2 *Cor.* 2. † 1 *Tim.* 1. 19.

Now if this Sentence can have no Effect, if it cannot ſignify any thing to them, if they are juſt in the ſame Condition after it, which they were before, why ſhould it teach them not to blaſpheme? Why ſhould a Sentence which they had nothing to fear from, make them any longer afraid to continue in their Errors? Here was therefore either a pious Fraud made uſe of by the Apoſtle, to fright Men from their Hereſies by ſomething which was in itſelf vain and inſignificant, or elſe your Lordſhip has mightily miſtaken the Matter, in declaring that it is vain and inſignificant. The Apoſtle plainly inflicts theſe Cenſures, as a Terror to Offenders, and to frighten them from continuing in their evil Courſes; but if, as you ſay, Perſons be juſt in the ſame Condition after this Sentence, in which they were before, if it has no Effect upon them, though they are rightly cenſured, and yet die impenitent, which is what you expreſsly ſay of this *Corinthian*, then it is plain they are only pretended Terrors, and that when the Apoſtles uſe them as ſuch, they muſt be charged with uſing them as a pious Fraud. And it muſt be owned that your Lordſhip has very frankly made the Diſcovery.

But whoever has Piety enough to believe thoſe Firſt Ambaſſadors of Chriſt, will clear them from ſuch a Charge, and rather think it poſſible that you may miſtake in your Philo-

Philoſophy, then they in their Divinity.

To proceed; You declare that though the *inceſtuous* Corinthian *had died in an impenitent Condition, the Sentence of the Church would have had no Effect in the other World:* By which you muſt mean, that it could not affect his Condition there, ſo as to increaſe his Puniſhment, and that becauſe the *Sentence did not add to God's Diſpleaſure, which he incurs ſolely upon account of his own Behaviour, and not the Sentence of Men* *. As thus, I ſuppoſe, your Lordſhip means, that if an Adulterer is cenſured by the Church, he is under God's Diſpleaſure ſolely on account of his Adultery, and not more ſo, on account of the Sentence of the Church; which cannot make him more an Adulterer, or more guilty in the Sight of God. It is for this reaſon that Church Cenſures are ſo inſignificant, ſo void of all Effect in the other World; becauſe it is our Sins alone, and not the Sentence of Men, which loſes us the Favour of God.

Let us therefore, my Lord, ſuppoſe that God himſelf had delivered *this Sentence* againſt the *Corinthian* which the Church did, your Lordſhip's Doctrine would have procured him the ſame Eaſe and Quiet, and taught him to be no more concerned about it, than if it had been a *mere Church Cenſure*, For it is

* P. 37.

as true in your Lordſhip's Senſe, that the *Sentence* of God did not add to his Diſpleaſure againſt him, that he was not angry at him becauſe of his *Sentence*, but upon account of the Offender's *Behaviour*. But, my Lord, will it therefore follow, that there is nothing to be dreaded in ſuch a Sentence? Will it follow, that if the Perſon dies impenitent under it, that it would have no Effect in the other World? Would your Lordſhip go about, and preach Liberty to Perſons under ſuch a Sentence, and aſſure them that the Sentence itſelf could have no Effect, that they were but juſt where they were before it was pronounced? Would you think it proper to deliver Men from ſuch Apprehenſions, and perſuade them that they are in no Danger from the Sentence of God? And that becauſe it is not his own Sentence, but their Behaviour which encreaſes his Diſpleaſure.

This may perhaps appear a little too ſhocking, to ſet up for an *Advocate* for the *Laity* againſt the *Sentence* of God; but, my Lord, if you was to do ſo, you would have the ſame Argument to defend your ſelf againſt any Effect in the *Divine Sentence*, which you now have againſt any Effect in the Sentence of the Church. It would be then as much to the Purpoſe to ſay, that God is not diſpleaſed with them, on the account of his *own Sentence*, but purely for their own *Behaviour*; as it is to tell Offenders, that it is not the

Sentence

Sentence of the Church, but their *Behaviour* which brings them under the Divine Diſpleaſure.

I muſt here therefore, my Lord, beg leave to call this a *ſtrict Demonſtration*, that if the Sentence of the Church is not to be feared; if it hath no Effect, becauſe it is not the *Sentence*, but our own *Behaviour* which alone procures us the Divine Diſpleaſure; if this be true, it is *Demonſtration*, that if God himſelf was to pronounce this Church Sentence, and turn Offenders out of Communion, that there would be *nothing to be feared from it*, that it could have *no Effect* in the other World; for God's Diſpleaſure againſt them, would not be occaſioned by his own *Sentence*, but by their *Behaviour*. So that was the Diſcipline of the Church in God's own Hands, and were he with his own Voice to threaten Sinners, as the Church now doth, your Lordſhip would be as much obliged to comfort the *Laity* againſt any Apprehenſion of any Effect from the *Sentence* itſelf, as you are now to deliver them from the *Fear of Man's Judgment*.

Again; If the *Sentence* of the Church is not to be dreaded, if it can have *no Effect* in the other World, becauſe we incur the Divine Diſpleaſure ſolely on account of our own Behaviour; then it is certain, that the Sentence of Chriſt himſelf at the laſt Day can have no Effect in the other World.

If therefore any unwary Divine, ſhould endeavour to alarm his Congregation with the *Effects* of Chriſt's Sentence at the laſt Day, your Lordſhip has taught any one to reject the *Doctrine*, as *greatly injurious to the Honour of God*; and that ſuch *Doctrine was alſo impoſſible in itſelf to be conceived*, he might preſume *ſtrictly to demonſtrate* *.

A Sentence which makes not a Tittle of Alteration in the Condition of a Man, in the Eyes of God, with regard to his Favour or Diſpleaſure, cannot be ſaid to have any Effect in the other World †. *But the Sentence of Chriſt at the laſt Day is of this ſort.*

Therefore the Sentence of Chriſt makes not a Tittle of Alteration in the Condition of a Man, in the Eyes of God, with regard to his Favour or Diſpleaſure.

That the Sentence of Chriſt makes no Alteration in the Condition of a Man with regard to the Favour or Diſpleaſure of God, is plain from hence; *that Men incur the Divine Diſpleaſure* ſolely on account of their own Behaviour.

Thus, my Lord, it is demonſtratively certain, that as you have argued againſt the Effects of the Chuch's *Sentence* in the other World, you have taught any one to argue againſt any Effect in the Sentence of Chriſt in the next World; and conſequently it muſt

* P. 36. † P. 36.

be

be as *unwary* Doctrine, to frighten People with the Effects of Christ's Sentence, as to terrify them with the Effects of the Sentence of the Church. And you have offered such an Argument for the utter Insignificancy of this Sentence, as would make it equally insignificant, and void of all Effect, though it was pronounced by God himself. So that as much as you often seem to expose it as the *Sentence* of *weak* and *fallible* Men, yet your Argument does not reject it as a *fallible* Sentence, but as it is a *Sentence* far from having any Effect. So that if it was pronounced by God himself, it must be as much without *Effect*, and every Sentence which ever can be pronounced by God, must be without any Effect as to his Favour or Displeasure, because that is solely occasioned by our own Behaviour. Therefore an *infallible* Sentence can no more have any Effect, than a *fallible* one, because it is our *Behaviour* alone which can affect us. This, my Lord, will be of great use to some People, who will be glad to find that they have no more Effects to fear from God's Sentence, either in this World or the next, than your Lordship has from the Church.

Again; if there be *no Effect* in the Sentence of the Church in the other World, because our *Behaviour* alone incurs the Divine Displeasure, then *nothing* which God inflicts upon us here, can have *any Effect* in the other World.

If

If therefore God's *Judgments* were visibly fallen upon some *Town* or *Country*, and an *unwary* Preacher should take occasion to excite them to a speedy Repentance, from the sad *Effects* such *Judgments* would have in the other World, if they had not their designed Effects in this, and declare that if they died impenitent under them in this World, they would feel *worse Effects* of them in the other World: A Disciple of your Lordship's might thus reprove the Falseness and Cruelty of such Doctrine. " How can you terrify People with " such vain Fears about God's Judgments? Is " he provoked against us by his own *Thunder* " and *Lightening?* Do his own *Judgments* " add any thing to his Displeasure against us? " Can any thing but our own Sins and Be- " haviour create his Displeasure? Therefore " we are certainly in the same Condition, as " to that, which we were in before his *Judg-* " *ments* fell upon us; and if we die impeni- " tent under them, they can have *no Effect* " in the other World. False then and greatly " dishonourable to God is your Doctrine, " which supposes any thing can have any " Effect of that kind, but our own Behavi- " our. To alarm us therefore with the *Ef-* " *fects* of such *Judgments*, is to put false " Fears into our Minds, and teach us to dread " things which are *impossible*; for it is im- " possible that any thing but our *own Be-*

" *haviour*

" *haviour* ſhould increaſe our Puniſhment."

Now, my Lord, is it cruel and unwary Doctrine to awaken Sinners under God's *Judgments* to Repentance, from a Senſe of the *worſe Effects* of thoſe Judgments in the other World, if they do not bring them to Repentance in this? If it is not, I deſire to know, why it is not as reaſonable to alarm People with the *Effects* of *ſpiritual Puniſhments*, if diſregarded, as with the Effects of God's Judgments, if they are neglected? What is there in the Nature of the Thing, why one Puniſhment may have Effect in the other World, and not the other? They are both *equally* God's *Puniſhments*, intended for the *ſame* Ends.

When Perſons are rightly turned out of the Church, and denied the ordinary Means of Grace, they are as truly under God's *ſpecial Judgment*, as a *Country* which is oppreſſed with *Famine* or *Peſtilence*; the one is his *inſtituted, ordinary Judgment*, to terrify Men from Iniquity; the other is his *extraordinary Judgment*, his miraculous Call to Repentance. It is therefore as ſound a Chriſtian Doctrine, to ſay, that if Perſons die impenitent under God's extraordinary Judgment, that ſuch Judgment will have no Effect in the other World; as to ſay, that if the inceſtuous *Corinthian* had died impenitent under the juſt Sentence of the Church, *i. e.* God's *ordinary* Judgment, that ſuch *Sentence* or *Judgment* would have had

had no Effect in the other World. And conſequently, to endeavour to terrify Sinners with the Effects of God's *Judgments* in the other World, if they diſregard them here, is as much condemned by your Lordſhip, as the Dean of *Chicheſter*'s Doctrine concerning the *Effects* of ſpiritual Puniſhments in the next World.

Laſtly; Our bleſſed Saviour *told* the *Jews*, that if *he had not come, they had not had Sin; but now they have no Cloak for their Sin:* Which plainly implies, that his *coming* into the World altered their *Condition* as to the *Favour* of God, becauſe it made them more guilty in his Sight than they were before he came. Yet your Lordſhip's Argument againſt the *Effects* of Church Puniſhments, directly denies this Doctrine. For your Objection againſt any *Effects* in Church *Puniſhments*, is full as ſtrong againſt any *Effects* in Chriſt's *coming* into the World. And if People may be more guilty in the Sight of God, after Chriſt is *come*, they may be more guilty after they have been *cenſured* by the Church, for the Reaſon is the ſame in both Caſes. For there can be no Reaſon given, why Chriſt's coming ſhould affect their Condition with regard to the Favour of God, but that he had a *Divine Miſſion*, and was an *Authoritative Call* to Repentance; but this is equally true of *Excommunication*, that it is a *Divine Inſtitution*, an *Authoritative Call* to Repentance;

tance; therefore they must either both be allowed to *affect* People's *Condition* with regard to the *Favour* of God, or neither; for the Reason is *exactly* the same in both Cases.

If therefore a learned *Pharisee*, seeing a relenting *Publican* touched with this Declaration of our Saviour's, should have reproved him after this manner:

" You need not be concerned at this Per-
" son's *coming* into the World, for his *coming*
" does not encrease God's Displeasure against
" you, which can only be raised by your
" own *Behaviour*; it is solely on account of
" that, that you can be out of God's *Favour*.
" Sinners are out of God's Favour, if this
" Person had never *come*, and his coming
" does not add to God's Displeasure against
" them; neither if they die in an impenitent
" Condition after he is come, will his *coming*
" have any Effect in the other World, where
" their Condition will not be determined by
" his *coming*, but by their own *Behaviour*:"

I should be glad, my Lord, to know what you could have said against such a Declaration, or how a Person who would have told the *incestuous Corinthian*, that if he died impenitent under the *Censure* of the Church, that it would have no Effect in the other World, could have any thing to object to the *Pharisee*, who tells the *Publican*, if he died impenitent after Christ's *coming*, that his *coming* will have *no Effect* in the other World.

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The *Phariſee* has *exactly* the ſame Reaſon, to tell the *Publican*, that he was neither the more, nor the leſs, out of God's Favour for Chriſt's *coming*, that you have to tell the *Corinthian*, *that he was neither the more, nor the leſs, out of God's Favour for what was done by the Church.* For the Cenſure here was right and infallible, and paſſed in the Name and by the Authority of Chriſt; it was paſſed by an *Apoſtle*, and you affirm that *Chriſt was in all that the Apoſtles did*; therefore it may be truly ſaid, that Chriſt himſelf *came* to the *Corinthian* in this Sentence, it was his *Authority* and *Infallibility* which cenſured him; and yet you ſay that if he had died impenitent under *this Cenſure*, he had been juſt where he was before, and it would have had *no Effect* in the other World.

Pray therefore, my Lord, let us know how any one can be more guilty for Chriſt's *coming*, or why it ſhall have any Effect in the other World upon thoſe who die impenitent? A few Reaſons againſt this *Phariſee*, would be ſo many Reaſons againſt your Lordſhip's Doctrine, For Chriſt as truly *comes* to Chriſtians in his *Inſtitutions*, as he *came* to the *Jews* in *Perſon*; and it is as dangerous to diſregard him in the one Appearance, as in the other.

This Account of Excommunication will, I hope, be thought a ſufficient Anſwer to your Lordſhip's ſtrict Demonſtration, that *it has no Effects*

Effects in the other World, nor adds any thing to God's Diſpleaſure. For from this it appears, that when you ſay, that *ſuppoſing no ſuch Puniſhment inflicted upon a wicked Chriſtian, he is under the Diſpleaſure of Almighty God to an* equal Degree, *as he would be if it were inflicted* *: It is as falſe as to ſay, that a *wicked Jew* was under the ſame Diſpleaſure of God before Chriſt came, as he was afterwards; or that a Perſon impenitent under an *extraordinary Judgment*, is no more out of God's Favour afterwards, than he was before, or if God had never viſited him. It is as falſe as to ſay, that if God himſelf was to pronounce the *Sentence* of the Church, that Perſons under it would be juſt in the ſame Degree of Favour they were before, or that the Sentence of Chriſt at the laſt Day will have no Effect.

The other Part of your Demonſtration proceeds thus; Excommunication has no Effect, becauſe *ſuppoſing it wrongfully inflicted upon a Chriſtian, he is ſtill equally in the Favour of God* †.

The whole of this Argument amounts to this, that a *right* Cenſure of the Church hath no Effect, becauſe a *wrong* one hath not. I ſhould think any one in a mighty want of Proof, who ſhould ſay that the Excommunication of the *inceſtuous Corinthian* could

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* P. 37. † P. 37.

have

have no Effect, becauſe the Excommunication of ſome virtuous Perſon will not have any Effect; yet this is your Lordſhip's Demonſtration, that it can ſignify nothing when it is *right*, *becauſe* it ſignifies nothing when it is *wrong*.

Is it an Argument, my Lord, that when a *Bullet* flies through a Man's Head it has *no Effect* upon him, becauſe it will have no Effect if it *miſs* him? Is it a Proof that *Motion* cannot produce *Heat*, becauſe *Reſt* cannot produce *Heat*?

If not, how comes it to be an Argument that a *right* Sentence hath no Effect, becauſe a *wrong* one hath not the *ſame* Effect?

A *right* Sentence is as oppoſite to a *wrong* one, as *Motion* is to *Reſt*; and it is as good Senſe to ſay *Motion* has no ſuch Effect, becauſe *Reſt* has no ſuch Effect; as to ſay a *right* Sentence has no Effect, becauſe a *wrong* one has not the ſame.

A *right* Sentence, is the *only* Excommunication which Chriſt hath inſtituted, and to which alone this Effect belongs; but it is ſtrange *Logick* to infer, that this *Inſtitution* cannot have *ſuch* an Effect, *becauſe* ſomething which Chriſt hath *not* inſtituted, hath not the ſame Effect.

A *wrong* Sentence is as truly a *Breach* and *Tranſgreſſion* of that *Excommunication* which Chriſt hath inſtituted, as Adultery is a *Breach* of the ſeventh Commandment; it is therefore

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as abſurd to ſay, that *Chaſtity* hath not *ſuch an* Effect, becauſe *Adultery* hath not the *ſame* Effect, as to affirm that a *right* Sentence hath not ſuch an Effect, becauſe a *Violation* of that right Sentence hath not the ſame Effect: Your Lordſhip's Argument is this, that the *Sentence* hath not *ſuch* an Effect in *ſome* Circumſtances, becauſe it hath not the *ſame* Effect in *all* Circumſtances: Which reſolves itſelf into this Propoſition, *That nothing can produce any particular Effect, unleſs it produce the ſame Effect in all Circumſtances.*

Your Lordſhip might as well have called it a *Demonſtration* againſt *all Effects* in the World, as againſt the *Effects* of ſpiritual Cenſures: For there is nothing in the World, no Powers either *Natural*, *Moral*, or *Political*, which produce their Effects but in ſome *ſuppoſed right* Circumſtances; yet this Eccleſiaſtical Power is *demonſtrated* away by your Lordſhip, becauſe it does not produce the ſame Effect in *all* Circumſtances.

Farther; If there is no Effect in a *right Sentence* of the Church, becauſe there is no Effect in a *wrong* one; then it will follow, that there is no Effect in either of the Sacraments when *rightly* received, becauſe they want ſuch Effect in Perſons who do not rightly receive them. It may as often happen that the Sacraments are adminiſtered in *wrong* Circumſtances, and as void of that Effect for which they were intended, as any *wrong* Sentence of the Church be pronounced;

but does it therefore follow, that there is *no Effect* in the Sacraments, that they are empty and uſeleſs to thoſe who receive them rightly, becauſe they are ſo to thoſe who receive them otherwiſe? Your Lordſhip muſt either affirm that the Sacraments have no Effect, or that the *Opus operatum* is always effectual; for if you ſay they have Effect, though not always, then it is certain that the *Sentence* of the Church may have Effect, though not *always*. Whether your Lordſhip will own the Popiſh Doctrine of the *Opus operatum*, or deny the Sacraments to be * Means of Grace, that is, to have any Effect, I cannot tell; but ſure I am, if you do not hold one of theſe Doctrines, you muſt own the Sacraments to have *conditional* Effects in *ſuppoſed* Circumſtances, which will ſufficiently confute your own *ſtrict Demonſtation*, that Excommunication can have *no* Effect, becauſe it has it not in *all* Circumſtances.

Again; I preſume it may very juſtly be ſaid, that the Chriſtian Revelation hath *ſome Effect* towards the Salvation of Mankind; but then it hath not this Effect *always* and *in all Caſes*, it is only effectual upon *certain Conditions*. Now if Excommunication can have no Effect, becauſe it is not effectual when it is wrongfully pronounced, then the Chriſtian Revelation can have no Effect towards ſaving thoſe who embrace it as they

* See the Demonſtration of the groſs and fundamental Errors, in the plain Account of the Sacrament, &c.

ſhould

ſhould, becauſe it has no ſuch Effect on thoſe who embrace it otherwiſe. The Reaſon of the Thing is the ſame in both Caſes, and any one may as juſtly ſet forth the Vanity and Inſignificancy of the Chriſtian Revelation, becauſe it does not ſave all its Profeſſors, as your Lordſhip expoſes the Weakneſs and Vanity of ſpiritual Cenſures, becauſe they do not abſolutely, and in all Caſes, throw People out of God's Favour.

I hope I have here ſaid enough, to vindicate the Authority and Effects of the ſpiritual Puniſhments of the Church, againſt all your Lordſhip has advanced againſt them.

I ſhall make an Obſervation or two more upon this Head, and then proceed to the other Parts of your Anſwer.

You ſay, the *inceſtuous* Corinthian *was never the more or the leſs in God's Favour for what was done in the Church* *. This Doctrine I have already confuted, and ſhall now only ſet this Paſſage in another Light. Let us ſuppoſe that you had ſaid, that *no Man is more in God's Favour for being rightly baptized by the Church.* Now if a Perſon is not more in God's Favour after he is rightly baptized by the Church, than he was before, then it is certain, that there is no need of Baptiſm by the Church; for any thing is ſufficiently proved needleſs or uſeleſs in Religion, if it neither procures nor loſes the Favour of

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 43.

God. This is undeniably certain, that if we are not more in the Favour of God for being duly baptized by the Church, than if we were not baptized at all, that then that Baptism is a *useless Trifle*.

Now this is the Doctrine which your Lordship has taught; for he that says the *incestuous Corinthian*, though justly turned out of the Church, *was neither the more or the less in God's Favour for what was done by the Church*; says likewise, that he who is duly baptized into Covenant with God by the Church, is never the more or the less in God's Favour for being duly baptized by the Church. For if it be a mere Trifle, and altogether insignificant to us, as to the Favour of God, to be turned out of the Church, by such an Authority; it must be as *mere* a *Trifle* to be admitted into the Church by the same Authority. So that he who declares the one, plainly declares the other: For this is evidently plain, that if nothing be *lost* as to the Favour of God, by our being duly turned out of the Church, that then nothing is *got* as to the Favour of God, by our being duly admitted into the Church.

For if our being in the Church was any Step towards God's Favour, or rendered us more acceptable to him, those Degrees of Favour and Acceptance must be certainly lost, by our losing that which was the Cause of them.

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He therefore who asserts it is a *Trifle* to be *turned* out of the Church, must also assert, that it is as fruitless and trifling a thing to be *admitted* into the Church. So that all your Lordship's Raillery and Contempt thrown upon *human Excommunications*, falls as directly upon *human Baptisms*; and makes them as truly fruitless Trifles without any Advantage, as it makes Excommunication a Trifle without any Punishment.

This therefore is the Sum of your new Religion, set up out of pure Tenderness to the Laity, to deliver them from the Weight and Burden of *Ordinances*; this is to be their Support against human *Excommunications*, human *Benedictions*, human *Baptisms*, &c. that whether before or after *Baptism*, whether before or after *Excommunication*, they are still the *same Children of God*.

Again, you say, *If it be supposed (as it sometimes is upon this Subject) that a Person behaves himself under the most undeserved Censures, with any degree of Impatience, Pride, or Stubbornes, and that this displeaseth Almighty God; it is plain that he incurs no part of that Displeasure, upon account of the* Sentence *of Men, but solely upon the account of his own* Behaviour; *it being his own Behaviour alone, and not the Sentence of Men, which has any such Effect.*

Here, my Lord, your *Philoſophy* is upon the ſtretch, and rather than a *Chriſtian* Inſtitution ſhould have any Force or Effect, you have let it run ſuch lengths, as to make even the Ten *Commandments* as mere Trifles as the *Sentence* of Men.

As for Inſtance; Suppoſe a Perſon ſhould tell a Friend that he had a great liking to ſome of his Neighbour's Goods, but that the eighth Commandment made him afraid to take them from him; if his Friend were but a Maſter of your *Philoſophy*, he might ſoon convince him of the Folly of ſuch a Fear. He might tell him, that *if it be ſuppoſed (as it ſometimes is ſuppoſed in this Caſe) that by his manner of taking Goods from his Neighbour, that he diſpleaſeth Almighty God; it is plain that he incurs no Part of that Diſpleaſure upon account of the Commandment, but ſolely upon the Account of his own Behaviour; it being his own Behaviour alone, and not the Commandment, which has any ſuch Effect.* He might alſo aſſure him, that the *Commandment itſelf* cannot hurt him, that he is not more or leſs in God's Favour, for what that Commandment *ſays*, but purely for what he himſelf *does*.

I now, my Lord, freely ſubmit it to the Judgment of common Senſe, whether your profound *Philoſophy*, does not as truly make void and ſet aſide the Force and Effect of the Commandment, as the *Effect* of Excommunication.

For

For it is plainly as reaſonable to tell a *Thief*, that the eighth Commandment cannot hurt him; that if he ſteals, it is not the Commandment, but his own Behaviour alone, which will have any Effect; as to declare, that an impenitent Offender is neither more or leſs in the Favour of God for what is done by the Church, becauſe even ſuppoſing God to be angry at him for his Behaviour towards the Sentence of the Church, yet it is not the Sentence, but his own Behaviour, which cauſes the Divine Diſpleaſure; therefore the Sentence, ſays your Lordſhip, is a Trifle without Effect. And therefore may it alſo be ſaid, that the eighth Commandment is a Trifle without Effect; for it is as true of the Commandment in this Senſe, and your Lordſhip is as much obliged to ſay that it is our Behaviour againſt the Commandment, and not the Commandment itſelf, which will raiſe God's Diſpleaſure, as to ſay it is our Behaviour under the Sentence, and not the Sentence itſelf, which brings God's Diſpleaſure upon us; ſo that it is undeniably plain, that if for this reaſon the Sentence of the Church be a Trifle without any Effect, that for the ſame reaſon the Commandment muſt be equally a Trifle, and equally without any Effect.

And now, my Lord, need we not heed the Commandments, becauſe it is not the Commandments themſelves which will have any Effect upon us? Why then are we to be ex-

horted, and preached up into a Contempt of the Sentence of the Church, becauſe it is not the Sentence itſelf will have any Effect upon us? Is it ſafe to ſin againſt the Authority of the Commandment, becauſe it is not the Commandment itſelf which can puniſh us? If not, where is the Senſe, or Reaſon, or Chriſtianity of telling us, that we need not heed the Sentence of the Church, becauſe the Sentence itſelf cannot puniſh us?

Suppoſe ſome High-Church-man had writ a Treatiſe againſt Stealing, and had carried the Matter ſo very far, as to talk of the fatal Effect which the eighth Commandment would have upon Offenders, when it ſhould riſe up in Judgment and condemn them.

Would your Lordſhip think yourſelf obliged, in regard to the *Liberty* of thoſe who want other People's *Goods*, to tell them, that indeed they ought to take care to act with Sincerity in their acquiring the temporal Things of this Life, that they ought to conſider with the utmoſt Impartiality the Nature of Property, and the Conditions of that *Original Contract*, which firſt ſettled the *Rights* and *Bounds* of it, and gave every Man a Right in ſuch or ſuch a Part of the Things of this Life; but that if they ſhould through *Impatience* of Want, or *Pride*, or any other Paſſion or Prejudice, make too free with their Neighbour's Property, and ſo diſpleaſe Almighty God; would you think your ſelf

obliged

obliged to tell them, that *the fatal Effects of the eighth Commandment*, and its pretended rising up in Judgment hereafter, is all *Sham* and *Banter*; and that however God may be displeased with them, yet that Commandment will have no Effect upon them? Would your Love of Liberty, your Concern for the Laity, engage you to give so much Comfort, and preach such smooth things to such a Class of People?

Thus much may be fairly affirmed, that you might as well deliver such a sort of People from their Fear of the Commandment, as endeavour to persuade impenitent Offenders not to fear the Sentence of the Church. For as the Guilt of Stealing is aggravated by being contracted against the Authority of the eighth Commandment; so the Guilt of Impenitence is heightned, by a Continuance in it against that Authority in the Church, which is as truly founded by God to prevent the *Growth of Sin*, as the eighth Commandment was given by God to prevent *Stealing*. So that he who teaches Offenders to disregard this Sentence, which is authorized by God to awaken and terrify them into Repentance, does the same as if he should teach Thieves to disregard the eighth Commandment, which was given by God to affright People from stealing.

If it should be here objected, that there is a very great difference betwixt the Duty we owe to the

the eighth Commandment, and our Duty to the Sentence of the Church; becauſe the Commandment is always right and the ſame, whereas the Church may err in its Sentence.

To this it may be anſwered, that granting all this, that the Church may ſometimes err in its Sentence; yet if it is ever in the right, if it ever can be a fault, or dangerous for Sinners not to ſubmit to, and be corrected by it, this will condemn your Doctrine, which ſets it out conſtantly, and in all Circumſtances, as a Dream and Trifle, and without any Effect.

Secondly; Here is no room left for you to plead the Uncertainty of the Church's Sentence, in regard to the Certainty of the Commandment; becauſe you directly ſet forth your Doctrine in a Caſe (that of the inceſtuous *Corinthian)* where all was right and juſt, and yet declare that in that Caſe it was without any Effects; and that if the inceſtuous *Corinthian* had continued impenitent under it, and diſregarded it as long as he had lived, it had ſignified no more to him than if it had never been pronounced. And in this Caſe; my Lord, and upon this Suppoſition, that the Authority judges and condemns ſuch Sinners as it ought to do, it is as abominable to tell ſuch that they have nothing to fear from the Judgment of the Church, as to tell a Thief that he has nothing to fear from the eighth Commandment. And I here challenge all the

Reaſon

Reaſon which ever appeared againſt the Doctrines of Chriſtianity, to ſhow me, why it is not as agreable to the Scripture to declare, that if a *Thief* lives and dies in his Sins of Stealing, that he has nothing to fear from the eighth Commandment; as to declare that an impenitent Offender, though *juſtly* cenſured by the Authority of the Church, has nothing to fear from ſuch a Cenſure, though he lives and dies in the Contempt of it.

Thirdly and laſtly; Though the Church may ſometimes err in its Authority, and the Commandment is always right; yet your Doctrine makes it as reaſonable to declare the Commandment without any Effect, as to declare the Sentence of the Church to be without any Effect. For you do not ſay that Excommunication is a *Trifle without any Effect*, becauſe it is a Sentence which may ſometimes be wrong; but becauſe, though we ſhould diſpleaſe God under the Sentence of the Church, yet that Diſpleaſure would not have been occaſioned by the Sentence, but by our *Behaviour alone*. And this Doctrine plainly makes all the Commandments as mere *Trifles* and *void of all Effect*, as it makes the Sentence of the Church ſo. For it is as true in your Senſe, and you are as much obliged to ſay, that if we ſin againſt the Commandments, and incur the Diſpleaſure of God, that it is not the Commandments, but our Behaviour alone which cauſes it: And ſo the Commandments

ments of God have no more to do with the Favour of God, but are as mere *Dreams* without any Effect, as the human Excommunications you have so much exposed. This, my Lord, is a very compendious Confutation both of the *Law* and the *Gospel*; and is a good reason, why so many of those who have no regard for either, but think *Zeal* in Religion a Meanness of Spirit, are yet great *Zealots* for your Lordship's Opinions.

Of Church-Authority, as it relates to external Communion.

YOUR Lordship says, *I know of no Church Authority to oblige Christians to external Communion, nor any thing to determine them but their own Consciences* *. But to show your Desire to be informed, your Lordship frequently calls upon the Learned *Committee* to declare what the Authority of the Church is. It is something strange, that you should have been so long writing down the Authority of the Church, and yet not know what is meant by Church Authority; that you should take so much pains to oppose (as you say) only

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* *Answ. to Repr.* p. 112.

absolute

abſolute Authority, and yet not know whether there be any elſe, or what Authority you have left in the Church. It is yet ſomething ſtranger that a *Biſhop* of the Church, ſhould be frightening the *Laity* from a kind of Church Authority which is not claimed over them, and yet be at the ſame time pretendedly ignorant of what ſort of *Church Authority* they are under. Here you have been preaching againſt that, which they are not concerned with; but when you ſhould tell them *what kind* of Authority they are concerned with, you have not one word of Inſtruction; but call upon the *Committee* to declare, whether there be any ſuch thing as Church Authority which is not *abſolute*. My Lord, if there be not, to what purpoſe have you ſo often taken *Refuge* in the word *Abſolute?* Or where is the *Honeſty* or *Reaſon* of ſaying you have not denied *all* Authority, but only that which is *abſolute*, if you believe there is no Authority but what is *abſolute?* If therefore your Lordſhip has made this Diſtinction with *any* degree of *Sincerity*, if you intended any thing more by it, than an artful playing with Words; it plainly lies at your Door to ſhew what Authority you have not touched; and that in ſuppoſing that which is *abſolute*, you neither have, nor intended to oppoſe *all* Authority and Juriſdiction in Matters of Religion. But, inſtead of this, if the Learned *Committee* ſhould explain

plain to your Lordſhip what that Authority is, which is not *abſolute*; you only venture ſo far as to ſay, that if there is any ſuch Authority, *you are, for ought that you have ſaid, at liberty to declare for it* *. Mighty cautiouſly expreſſed, my Lord! Had a *Courtier*, who rather intends to *amuſe* than *inform*, and talk *artfully* than *ſincerely*, delivered himſelf in ſuch inconcluſive Terms, it had not been much Matter either of Wonder or Complaint. But for a *Biſhop*, who makes *Sincerity* to be of more worth than all the Chriſtian Religion; for this Biſhop, in a Cauſe which he declares himſelf ready to die in; in ſuch a Cauſe, as is of the laſt Conſequence to us all, as *Men*, *Chriſtians*, and *Proteſtants*; for this Biſhop to ſay, *if there be ſuch an Authority*, inſtead of declaring whether there is or not; and to ſay, *he is at liberty to declare for it*, inſtead of plainly ſaying whether he *ought or not*; however conſiſtent it may be with Sincerity, I am ſure it has too much the Appearance of the contrary.

For ſeeing you are charged with denying *all* Authority in the Church, if you conſulted Plainneſs and Sincerity, if you regarded the Information of the *Vulgar*, and the Peace of the Church, which way could theſe Conſiderations lead you to defend your ſelf; but either to ſhow that there was a real Autho-

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 25.

rity

rity in the Church, which you had not oppoſed; or elſe plainly to own that you had denied *all Authority*, becauſe all Authority of every kind is to be denied? But inſtead of declaring your ſelf openly and plainly for the ſake of Truth, Peace, and Sincerity, you take Refuge in Words, and ſecure your ſelf behind a Cloud of *Properly's* and *Abſolutely's*, to the Diſturbance of honeſt Minds, and to the Satisfaction of the Prophane.

Since your Lordſhip calls out ſo often to be told *what* that Authority is which obliges us to *external Communion*, I ſhall beg leave to offer theſe following Conſiderations upon this Head, and hope they will ſufficiently both aſſert and explain that Church Authority or Obligation, which we are all under to join in external Communion.

Your Lordſhip ſays; *I know of no Church Authority to oblige any Chriſtians to external Communion; nor any thing to determine them, but their own Conſciences* *. I ſhall therefore beg leave to obſerve to your Lordſhip, what *Authority* there is to oblige *All* Chriſtians to *external Communion*; and to ſhow, that they are no more left at liberty in this Matter, than they are at liberty to *ſteal* or *murder*.

I ſuppoſe it is not proper or true, to ſay, that you know of no Authority to oblige

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* P. 112.

any

any Christians, or any thing to keep them from the Practice of Stealing, but their own Consciences; because there is the express Authority of God against this Practice. Now if it would be improper and false to say this, because the Authority of God has so plainly appeared in it; I shall easily prove, that it is as false and improper to say, that we have *nothing but our Consciences to determine us* in the Case of *external* Communion, since the Authority of God is as express in obliging us to this *external Communion*, as in requiring us to be just and honest in all our Dealings.

I desire no more to be granted me here, than that it is necessary to be a Christian, and that we are called upon by the *Authority* of God to embrace this Religion as necessary to Salvation. This, my Lord, is the express Doctrine of the Scriptures; so that I hope I may presume upon it, as granted by your Lordship, that there is an Authority to oblige People to be Christians, and that this Authority makes it as necessary, that they should be Christians, as it is necessary to obey God, and conform to his Will.

First; If Christianity be a Method of Life necessary to Salvation, then we are necessarily obliged to external Communion; for we can no other way appear to be Christians, either to our selves or others, but by this external Communion. A Person who lives in a *Cloyster*, may as well be taken for a *Field General*,

General, as he who is not in *external* Communion, for a Chriſtian. For the Chriſtian Religion is a Method of Worſhip diſtinct from all others, in thoſe Offices and Duties which conſtitute external Communion; ſo that if you are ſo far obliged to be a Chriſtian, as to ſerve God differently from other People, you are obliged to *external Communion*, becauſe that Service which diſtinguiſhes the Chriſtian Worſhipper from all other People, is ſuch a Service as cannot be performed but in an external Communion in ſuch and ſuch Offices, *viz. Profeſſions of Faith, joint Prayers*, and the Obſervance of the *Sacraments*. *External* Communion is only another Word for the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, becauſe the ſeveral Duties and Obligations which concern any one as a Chriſtian, and diſtinguiſh him from other People, are Duties which as neceſſarily imply *external Communion*, as walking implies Motion. Therefore to aſk whether a Chriſtian be obliged to *external Communion*, is to aſk whether a Perſon who is obliged to walk, be obliged to move. The ſhort is this; No Man can be a Chriſtian, but by taking upon him the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity; the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity is nothing elſe but *external* Communion with Chriſtians; therefore it is as neceſſary to be in external Communion, as to be a Chriſtian.

I hope I need not prove to your Lordſhip, that there is an *Authority* to oblige People to

the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity; intending here only to prove, that the ſame Authority obliges us to external Communion.

Had your Lordſhip therefore declared to the World, that you know of no Authority to oblige People to be Chriſtians, it had been as *innocent* and *true* a Declaration, as this you have made concerning *external Communion*; there being plainly the ſame Authority obliging us to the one, as to the other. For, my Lord, what is implied in external Communion, but our communicating with our Fellow Chriſtians in thoſe Acts of Worſhip and Divine Service which Chriſtianity requires of us? And what Marks or Tokens can we ſhew of our Chriſtianity, but that we are of the Number of thoſe who are baptized into Chriſt's Church, for the joint Worſhip of God in that particular Service which the Chriſtian Religion has taught us? So that if we prove our ſelves Chriſtians, we muſt prove our ſelves in this external Communion, becauſe to be a Chriſtian implies no more, than the being of the Number of thoſe who viſibly unite and join in ſuch Acts and Offices of Divine Worſhip, as are proper to Chriſtians. If therefore there be *no Authority* to oblige us to external Communion, then no one is obliged to be a Chriſtian.

Secondly; If there be *no Authority* to oblige, or *any thing* to determine Chriſtians to *external Communion* but their own Conſciences,

ſciences, then it is plain, it is as lawful for all Chriſtians to be their own *Prieſts*, and confine themſelves to a private Worſhip ſeparate from every Chriſtian in the World, as to join in external Communion. For where there is no Authority or Obligation to determine our Practice, there the thing muſt needs be indifferent; and to do it or let it alone, muſt be *equally* lawful. If there was no Authority which obliged us to be baptized, it would not only be *lawful* to let it alone, but *idle* to trouble our Heads about it. The ſame is true of this external Communion; if we are under no *Law* concerning it, it is no part of our *Duty* either to do it, or let it alone.

It cannot here be ſaid, that though we are not obliged to external Communion with this or that Church, yet we ought to join with ſome particular Perſons, and not worſhip God conſtantly by our ſelves, and perform no Offices with other People. For if we are obliged to communicate with any one Perſon in the World, we are to hold Communion with the whole Church of Chriſt. For we are not obliged to communicate with this or that particular Perſon on account of any *Civil* or *Natural* Relation, but as we are *Chriſtians*, and from the *Common Nature* of our Chriſtianity. Since therefore our Obligation to communicate with any particular Perſons, does not ariſe from any private *particular* Relation, but

from the *common Nature* of our Religion; this does equally oblige us to hold Communion with *all* Chriſtians, as with any *particular* Chriſtians, they being all equally related to us as Chriſtians; and conſequently it is as neceſſary to hold Communion with the external viſible Church, as with any particular Chriſtian. From this alſo it is plain, that it is as lawful to avoid Communion with every particular Chriſtian in the World, as to refuſe Communion with any ſound Part of the Church on Earth.

I beg of your Lordſhip to produce but one Argument, why any *two or three* ſhould meet together for the Service of God, which will not equally prove it neceſſary that Chriſtians ſhould join in external Communion. May it all be laid aſide, my Lord? Need there be no more of this *aſſembling* our ſelves together for performing of Duties, which we thought we could not perform ſeparately?

I have ſhown in my ſecond Letter, that your Lordſhip cannot conſiſtently with your Principles, urge any Reaſons to any *Diſſenters* to come over to the Church of *England*; and here, my Lord, it will appear, that you have not one Argument againſt the *Abſenters* from *all Publick Worſhip*. For it would be as odd and unreaſonable in your Lordſhip to offer any Argument to ſuch an *Abſenter*, why he ſhould join in ſome Publick Worſhip, after you have denied an Authority which obliges

us

us to external Communion, as it would be for an *Atheiſt* who had denied the Neceſſity of *any* Religion, to perſuade a Man to be a *ſincere Mahometan*.

If your Lordſhip ſhould tell this *Abſenter* from all Communions, that he ought to join with ſome Communion or other in the Worſhip of God; might he not fairly ask your Lordſhip, how you came to tell the World that *you know of no Authority to oblige any Chriſtians*, or *any thing* to determine them to external Communion? Can any one be obliged to join in Divine Service, who is not obliged to *external Communion?* Could any one imagine that if he was not obliged to join in external Communion, that it was not lawful to ſtay at home? Could he think that when your Lordſhip was declaring againſt any Obligation to Church Communion, that you meant he ought to join himſelf with ſome of the Diſſenters? Had your Lordſhip plainly declared, that no Chriſtian need read *any Book* in the World, could you conſiſtently with your ſelf offer any Arguments why he ſhould read the *Bible?* Yet this is as conſiſtent, as to deſire any Perſon to communicate with any Body of Chriſtians, after you have plainly diſowned any Obligation to external Communion.

For whatever Arguments your Lordſhip can offer to an *Abſenter* from all Publick Worſhip, may be anſwered in this manner. "Either

" your Arguments for my joining with any " Chriſtians, are invented by your ſelf, and " of your own making, or they are not; if " they are Fictions of your Lordſhip's, and de- " ſtitute of any Foundation in the Will or " Authority of God, then they are vain and " to no Purpoſe; but that all ſuch Arguments " are mere Fictions and Inventions of your " own, is plain from your Lordſhip's expreſs " Declaration, that *you knew* of no *Autho-* " *rity, or any thing* to oblige or determine " Chriſtians to external Communion; ſo that " all the Arguments you can offer for my " external Communion, are declared by your " ſelf to be ſuch as are of *no Authority*, or " have *any thing* in them to *determine* me to " external Communion."

And indeed, had your Lordſhip firſt declared that there was no ſuch thing as *Figure* in *Bodies*, and then pretended to prove that the World is *round*, it would be no more miraculous, than firſt to give out, that no Chriſtians are obliged to external Communion, and afterwards take upon you to perſuade any one to join himſelf to ſome *Body* of Chriſtians. Here therefore your Lordſhip has ſo preached up and advanced this Kingdom of Chriſt, that conſiſtently with your ſelf, you cannot ſo much as require any one to be a viſible Member of it, or offer the leaſt Shadow of an Argument, why an Abſenter ſhould rather go to ſome Church, than truſt to his own Religion at home.

home. Your Lordſhip wrote a *Treatiſe* ſome Years ago on the *Reaſonableneſs of Conformity to the Church of* England. But, pray, my Lord, where is the *Reaſonableneſs* of conforming, if we are under no *Obligation* to conform? Where is the Reaſonableneſs of doing that, which is not our *Duty* to do? Where can be the *Reaſonableneſs* of going two or three *Miles* to Church for the ſake of external Communion, if there be *no Authority, or any thing to determine us to external Communion?* Can it be *reaſonable* to ſpend our Time and ſome Part of our Wealth in making up ſuch Meetings, as God has not required at our Hands?

Your Lordſhip muſt either therefore retract what you have ſaid, and allow that there is *an Authority* to oblige us to external Communion, or acknowledge that no Chriſtians are under any *Obligations* to ſerve God in any Communion, but may confine themſelves to a private Religion, ſeparate from every other Chriſtian in the World. That is, that no one is *obliged* to worſhip God in the publick Aſſembly, or join with any one elſe in the Service of God.

Thirdly; If there be no Authority to oblige us to *external Communion*, then it may well be queſtioned, how your Lordſhip can anſwer for your joining in external Communion in the Church of *England*. Your Lordſhip knows that the Communion of the Church of

England, gives great Offence to the *Papist* and *Protestant* Dissenters of all kinds; how then can your Lordship justify your doing that, which you need not do, which gives so much Scandal to so many *tender* Consciences?

Will your Lordship be of a Church, though it is this very Church Communion that is so very offensive? Your Lordship knows that the Animosities and Church Divisions amongst Christians is one of the most sore Evils under the Sun; that all the Party Heats and Controversies are concerning whom we are to communicate with, and in Defence of particular external Communions. Now, my Lord, what should that Christian do, who is all *Sincerity*, who believes there is no *Obligation* to external Communion, and who sees that the *pretended Necessity* of it, causes all the Difference and Division amongst Christians? Can that *sincere* Person who believes and knows all this, keep at the *Head* of a particular Communion? Can he support so *unnecessary*, so *needless* an Evil? Can that *sincere* Person be a *Bishop* in that Communion, which stands distinguished from other external Communions, chiefly as it is *episcopal Communion*, when he allows there is no Necessity of being in Communion either with *Bishops* or *any body* else? Could that *Pope* be reckoned *sincere*, who should declare that he knew of no Authority, or any thing to determine him to exercise the *papal* Powers, could he be a sincere Christian,

if

if he yet continued to exercise them to the *Scandal* and *Offence* of so many Christian Countries? If he could, so might your Lordship for continuing at the Head of an external Communion, which divides and disturbs Christians, though you know of *no Authority to oblige, or any thing to determine you* to this external Communion.

Surely your Lordship will have more Compassion at last for your *dissenting Brethren*, more Concern for the Peace of Christ's Kingdom, than to keep up such unnecessary Communions, and disturb so many weak Consciences, by joining externally in the Church of *England*, when you *know of no Authority, or any thing to oblige you* to join with any Body.

Suppose the Peace of *Great Britain* was miserably destroyed by *Party* Rage and Dispute about the *Stars*. Would your Lordship head one Party of *Star-gazers* against another? Would you join your self to such a vain and useless Cause at the Expence of the publick Peace? Now, my Lord, if there be *nothing* to *oblige* us to *external Communion*, it is all a *Trifle*, and mere *Star-gazing*; and a Person who appears in the Cause, and at the Head of this external Communion, can be no more a Friend to Christianity, by keeping up such an unnecessary Cause of Division, than he could be a good Subject, who should join in the needless idle Quarrels of *Star-gazing Party-*

Party-men. In a Word, if your Lordſhip knows of any thing that obliges you to continue in the Church of *England*, you ought not to have ſaid that *you know of no Authority to oblige, or any thing to determine any Chriſtian to external Communion:* But if you know of nothing that obliges you to continue in the Church of *England*, then you ought rather to leave it, than to bear a part in ſo needleſs a Community, and which gives ſo much Offence to all thoſe who diſlike the Terms of it.

Fourthly; If there be no Authority to oblige us to external Communion, how comes there to be ſuch a Sin as *Schiſm?* How comes the *Schiſmatic*, or Divider of Communions, to be ſo frequently in the Scriptures ranked amongſt the moſt guilty Offenders?

Can it be a Sin to be divided, unleſs we are under ſome Obligation to be united?

It has been always granted that *Schiſm* is the Separation of our ſelves from ſuch a Communion of Chriſtians, as we *ought* to have held Communion with. Now if ſeparate Worſhip from any Chriſtians in the World be the Sin of *Schiſm*, then there muſt be ſome Law that obliges thoſe *Schiſmatics* to join with thoſe Chriſtians, from whom they ſeparate, and conſequently there is an Authority which obliges Chriſtians to external Communion.

Your Lordſhip muſt either ſhow that *Schiſm* does not conſiſt in refuſing to communicate with

with ſome Chriſtians, or that though it be the damnable Sin of Schiſm to refuſe Communion with ſome Chriſtians, yet there is no Authority to oblige us to external Communion with any Chriſtians; *i. e.* that though Schiſm be a Sin, yet it is the Tranſgreſſion of no Law.

The Apoſtle ſays, *Mark thoſe who cauſe Diviſions contrary to the Traditions which ye have learned of me, and avoid them.* My Lord, what ſtrange Language is this, if there is nothing to oblige us to external Communion? If there is no Obligation to be united, why muſt they be marked who cauſe Diviſions? If there be no Authority that requires external Communion at our Hands, why muſt thoſe Perſons be avoided who prevent external Communion?

Either the Apoſtle, or your Lordſhip muſt be mightily miſtaken; the Apoſtle tells us that *Diviſions* in the Church are contrary to the Doctrine which he had taught, and therefore there is the expreſs Authority of the Apoſtle to oblige us to external Communion. But your Lordſhip ſays there is no Authority to oblige us to this Duty, therefore you muſt either maintain that the Apoſtle taught no ſuch Doctrine, though he ſaid he had, or that there is no Authority in his Doctrine to oblige us.

I ſuppoſe, my Lord, that the Apoſtle by Diviſions here means *external viſible Diviſions*, becauſe he bids them *mark* thoſe who cauſe them, and *avoid* them; for *inviſible* internal

internal Diviſions can no more be *marked*, or inviſible Schiſmatics *avoided*, than we can mark Peoples Thoughts, or lock out a *Spirit*. If therefore the Diviſion here ſpoken of be external Diviſion, then the Sin here condemned is a Breach of external Communion, and conſequently we are here required by the Apoſtle to join in external Communion; unleſs we can ſuppoſe, that the Apoſtle could condemn thoſe who were *externally divided*, without meaning that they ought to be *externally united*.

Fifthly; If there be no Authority to oblige us to external Communion, then there is no *Authority* to oblige us to be baptized. For Baptiſm is an external viſible Ordinance of God, which as plainly implies external Communion with others, as any Contract in the World implies Correſpondence with others. And any Perſon might as well be obliged to bargain and merchandize with others, without being obliged to be concerned with others, as be obliged to be baptized, without being obliged to external Communion.

For as we cannot baptize our ſelves, this ſhows that the Chriſtian Religion is not ſuited to the State of ſingle independent Perſons, but requires our external Communion to the Performance of its Obligations. And as we cannot be baptized by others, but by reſigning up our ſelves to the Obſervance of new Laws, this plainly proves that the Perſon is baptized into

into a State of *Society* and external Communion. That Baptiſm does not leave the baptized Perſon to a ſeparate independent Worſhip, is very plain from the following Inſtances.

The Church of *England*, in the Office for Baptiſm, thus expreſſes her ſelf: *We receive this Perſon into the Congregation of Chriſt's Flock*, &c. Again, *Seeing now —— This Perſon is regenerated and grafted into the Body of Chriſt's Church*, &c. I ſhould think it very plain, my Lord, to every Reader, that theſe Paſſages ſhow that Baptiſm neceſſarily implies external Communion, and puts it out of the Power of every baptized Perſon to refuſe external Communion, unleſs he will break through the Conditions of his Baptiſm. For can we be *received into the Congregation of Chriſt's Flock*, without being obliged to keep up this Congregation, or to perform any Duties or Offices conſidered as a Congregation or Flock? Can we in any Senſe be conſidered as a Congregation or a Flock, but in our Communion in thoſe Offices which ſhew us to be Chriſt's Flock? Can we be ſaid to be grafted into the Body of Chriſt's Church, if we are at liberty never to meet as a Church, or act as a Church?

The Apoſtle ſays, For *by one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body* *. What can

* 1 *Cor.* 12, 13.

more

more manifeſtly denote external Communion, than this Account of Baptiſm? Can we be baptized into one Body, and not be obliged to act as a Body? Can we act as a Body, by running away from one another, and refuſing to unite in that Service, into which we are baptized? I ſuppoſe we are here to be conſidered as a *Chriſtian Body*; but how a Number of People can be a Chriſtian Body, who are not united in Chriſtian Worſhip, is hard to conceive.

When therefore you declare that you know of *no Authority* to oblige Chriſtians to external Communion, you deſert the Doctrines of Chriſt, as plainly as if you ſaid, that you know of no Authority which obliges People to be baptized.

Sixthly; If there be no Authority to *oblige*, nor any thing to *determine* us to external Communion, then there is no Authority to oblige, nor any thing to determine us to communicate in the bleſſed *Sacrament* of the Body and Blood of Chriſt. For if there is any Law which obliges us to join externally in the Obſervance of this *Inſtitution*, then it is out of all doubt, that we are obliged to external Communion. Now if you will ſay that there is no Law of God as to this Matter, then the thing itſelf muſt needs be indifferent, and *private Maſs* muſt be allowed to be as right and lawful, as a joint Communion in the Holy Sacrament. Either therefore you muſt

muſt defend *private Maſs*, or ſhow ſome Authority againſt it; if you can produce any Authority againſt it, then you produce an Authority for external Communion, and contradict your other Declaration, where you give out, that you do not know of *any thing* to determine us to external Communion.

From all this it plainly appears, what *kind* of Authority that is, which obliges us to external Communion; it is that *ſame* Authority which obliges us to be *baptized*, to receive the *Communion*, to profeſs the *ſame* Faith, to worſhip God in the publick Aſſemblies, and to avoid the Sin of *Schiſm*; or, in a word, that ſame Authority which obliges us to be *Chriſtians*.

For all the Offices of Chriſtian Worſhip and Devotion which *conſtitute* external Communion, are every one *expreſsly* required by God; and therefore *external Communion*, which conſiſts only of theſe Offices, is *equally* required by God.

And this Authority may be very juſtly called *Church Authority*, becauſe it ariſes from the very Nature of the *Church*, becauſe it is the *Inſtitution* of the Church, from whence this Obligation to Communion ariſeth. For Chriſt has inſtituted this Church, in order to oblige Mankind to enter into it for the Salvation of their Souls: As the Church therefore is inſtituted for this End, the *Exiſtence* of the Church lays an Obligation upon all,

all, who have any Opportunity, of entering into it; and this Obligation will laſt as long as the Church of Chriſt ſhall laſt. The ſhort is this; God has inſtituted an *Order* or *Society* of People, for the *particular* manner of ſerving and worſhipping him; this Society is not a *voluntary* one, which we may be Members of, or not, as we pleaſe; but it carries, in its very *Nature* and *Inſtitution*, an Authority obliging us all, as we hope for Happineſs, to be Members of it; we are obliged to be of the Church, becauſe Chriſt has *inſtituted* the Church; therefore it is the *Inſtitution* of the Church, which lays us under an Obligation of entering into it; and this, and no other, is that *Church Authority* which obliges all People to *external Communion*.

Farther; This may be very properly called Church Authority, becauſe it was in the *Church*, or that *Order* of Men, which Chriſt had inſtituted, before the Scriptures were written.

When there was only this Order of Men, before the Writings of the *New Teſtament* were in being, there was then this Authority ariſing from that *inſtituted* Order of Men, which obliged others to enter into Communion with them; therefore this Authority which began with the Exiſtence of the Church, and flowed from the very *Nature* of the Church, may very juſtly be called *Church Authority*.

If

If it ſhould be aſked, whether this Authority be *abſolute?* I anſwer, it is juſt as *abſolute*, as that Authority which obliges us to be baptized. Our Saviour has told us, that *if we are not baptized, we ſhall be damned:* Here therefore is an *Authority* for Baptiſm; the Scripture has not ſaid whether this be ſo *abſolutely* obliging, that there is no room in any Caſe for a Diſpenſation; therefore it is no Caſe which concerns us. Now the *Authority* which obliges us to *external Communion*, is juſt upon the *ſame Terms*; the thing is as plainly required as *Baptiſm*; but whether in *any Caſes* it will be diſpenſed with, is what we have nothing to do with. If there be any *Sincerity*, any *Weakneſs*, any *Ignorance*, or the *Want* of any thing which will excuſe thoſe who refuſe to be *baptized*, thoſe *ſame* Conſiderations may excuſe the Refuſal of *external Communion* with the Church.

This, my Lord, is the *Nature* of that *Church Authority*, which obliges to *external Communion*; it is that very *ſame* Authority which obliges us to the Profeſſion of *Chriſtianity*, or to enter into Covenant with God. For he who is in external Communion with the Church of Chriſt, is of the Church of Chriſt, or in Covenant with God; and he who is not in external Communion, is not of the Church of Chriſt, nor in Covenant with God; and conſequently it is that *ſame* Authority which obliges us to be Chriſtians,

or in Covenant with God, which obliges us to external Communion.

So that when you say, you *know of no Church Authority to oblige, or any thing to determine People to external Communion*, it is directly saying, that you know of no Church Authority to oblige, or any thing to determine them to the *Profession* of Christianity, or to enter into *Covenant* with God.

If your Lordship should here say, that you only meant, you know of no *human* Authority to oblige People to external Communion, *&c.*

To this it may be answered, that you might as well have meant nothing at all by it, as have meant this. For,

First; Suppose the Question had been, whether there be any Authority, or what Authority it is, which obliges People to be *baptized?* and that in order to settle this Point, you had here declared, that *you know of no Church Authority to oblige, or any thing to determine them to be baptized, but their own Consciences.*

Could it be thought, my Lord, after this, that you had not denied *all Authority* for Baptism? Could it be supposed, that by this Declaration, you only meant to deny, that the Authority which obliges us to be baptized, is *Human* or *Civil* Authority? Could any one who only meant thus much, express himself in this manner?

Yet

Yet thus it is, that you have expreſſed your ſelf in the Diſpute concerning our Obligations to external Communion, you *know of no Church Authority to oblige, or any thing to determine People to it*; which makes it equally abſurd to ſuppoſe, that you only deny that our Obligation to *external* Communion ariſes from *any human* or *civil* Authority.

Secondly; If you only meant to deny an *human* or *civil* Authority in this Matter, how came you not to ſay ſo? How came you not to tell us what *Divine* or *Scripture* Authority there is to oblige us? Is it not as proper and as neceſſary in a Diſpute about *this* Authority, to declare the true and right Authority, as to proteſt againſt the wrong Authority? But indeed nothing can be more trifling than to ſay, that you have only denied any *human* or *civil* Authority in this Matter.

For, my Lord, whoever imagined that our Obligations to profeſs Chriſtianity, that is, to be Members of Chriſt's Church, could proceed from any human Authority? Human Authority may and ought to encourage us in the Practice of our Chriſtian Duties; but that our Obligation to ſerve God as Chriſtians, that is, in the external Communion of the Church, ſhould ariſe from any human Authority, can be ſuppoſed by none, but thoſe who imagine Chriſtianity to be a Creature of the *State*.

Thirdly; You not only ſay that you know of no *Church Authority* to oblige, but alſo add theſe Words, *nor any thing to determine People to external Communion, but their own Conſciences.*

Now, my Lord, if you only meant to deny a *human* Authority in this Matter; if you intended to own a *Divine* Authority to oblige us to external Communion; how come you to expreſs your ſelf thus contrary to your Meaning? For if you believe there is a *Scripture* or *Divine* Authority which obliges us to external Communion, ſurely this *Authority* is *ſomething*, and has *ſome* Right to *determine* us to external Communion; yet you expreſsly ſay that you do not know of *any thing* to determine Chriſtians to external Communion.

If it was aſked, whether Chriſtians are obliged to *pray* for their *Enemies*, and you ſhould anſwer, I do not know *any* thing to determine them to pray for their Enemies; would it not be *Nonſenſe*, and *Contradiction* after this Declaration, to ſuppoſe, that you acknowledge that the Scriptures require Chriſtians to pray for their Enemies?

But to ſuppoſe, that you acknowledge a *Divine* or *Scripture* Authority which obliges to external Communion, after you have expreſsly declared that you do not know of *any thing* to determine us to external Communion, is *equally* contradictory.

Laſtly;

Laſtly; You ſay you do not know *of any thing to determine Chriſtians to external Communion, but their own Conſciences.*

Now this farther ſhews, that you deny all *Divine* as well as *Human* Authority to determine us to external Communion. For if there was a Divine Law which required this Practice, we are no more left ſolely to our own Conſciences in this Practice, than if it was determined by an expreſs human Law.

For can it be ſaid that the *Jews* had nothing but their own Conſciences to determine them to *abſtain* from *Blood?* Can it be ſaid that *Chriſtians* have nothing but their own Conſciences to determine them to receive the *Holy Sacrament?* If this cannot be ſaid, becauſe there is a Divine Law in both theſe Caſes; then it is as falſe and abſurd to ſay, that there is nothing but our own Conſciences to determine us to external Communion, if there be a *Divine* Authority which requires this Practice. And conſequently, you have plainly denied all *Divine* or *Scripture* Authority for external Communion, when you ſay that you do not know of *any thing to determine People to external Communion, but their own Conſciences.* The ſhort is this; if you will ſay, that you own a *Divine* and *Scripture* Authority which obliges us to external Communion; and if you will allow this Authority to be *ſomething*,

then your Contradiction in this Matter, is as palpable and groſs as ever appeared in any Writings; for you have expreſsly ſaid, that you do not know of *any thing* to determine us to external Communion: But if you own a Scripture Authority that obliges us to external Communion, then your Contradiction proceeds thus, that you do know of *ſomething*, but you do not know of *any thing* to determine us to external Communion. If you will not aſſert both Parts of this Contradiction, then you muſt ſtand to that which you have aſſerted, *viz.* that you do not know of *any thing* to determine us to external Communion, which I have already ſhown, is the ſame thing as declaring, you know of no Authority, or *any thing* to determine People to profeſs Chriſtianity, or enter into Covenant with God. But to proceed,

If you ſhould ſay that you do not deny an *Authority* that obliges us to external Communion in *general*, but only an *Authority* that can *oblige* us to any *particular* external Communion.

To this I anſwer, that this is a groundleſs, falſe Diſtinction; for our *Obligation* to external Communion with the Church of Chriſt in *general*, and our *Obligation* to external Communion with this or that *particular* Church, is exactly *one* and the *ſame* Obligation.

For we are not obliged to join with this or that *particular* Church, for any *private*, *particular*

ticular Reaſons, but becauſe we are obliged to be Chriſtians, or of the Church of Chriſt. And as no ſound Part of Chriſt's Church, is more his Church than another ſound part, ſo if we ſeparate from any ſound part, we are as truly out of Chriſt's Church, as if we had ſeparated from every part. And we can give no Reaſons for ſeparating from ſuch a part, but ſuch as will equally juſtify our ſeparating from every part of Chriſt's Church; and conſequently there can be no Reaſons offered why we ſhould be Chriſtians, or of the Church of Chriſt, but will equally oblige us to enter into that particular part of Chriſt's Church which offers itſelf to us. For the whole Intent of entering into this or that *particular* Church, is only to be a Chriſtian, or of the Church of Chriſt, and therefore it muſt be one and the ſame Authority which obliges us to be Chriſtians, that obliges us alſo to be of any *particular* Church.

There is a *Scripture Authority* which obliges us to forgive our *Enemies:* Now it would be as *proper* to ſay, that though there is an Authority which obliges us to *forgive* our Enemies in *general*, yet that Authority does not oblige us to forgive our *particular* Enemies, as to ſay, that though we are obliged to be of the Church of Chriſt in *general*, yet we are not obliged to be of this or that particular part of Chriſt's Church.

For the Church of Chriſt in *general*, as truly conſiſts of theſe *particular Parts*, as our Enemies in *general*, conſiſt of our *particular* Enemies.

So that, as it is *one* and the *ſame* Authority which obliges us to forgive our *Enemies*, that obliges us to forgive our *particular* Enemies, ſo it is *one* and the *ſame* Authority that obliges us to be *Chriſtians*, that obliges us alſo to communicate with that *particular* ſound part of Chriſt's Church where we live.

There is therefore no room for this Diſtinction, to ſuppoſe, that though we may be obliged to be of Chriſt's Church, yet we are not obliged to be of this or that *particular* ſound part of Chriſt's Church; it being fully as abſurd, as to ſuppoſe that we may be obliged to be Chriſtians, and yet not be obliged to be Chriſtians.

When therefore you declare, that you know of no *Church Authority* to oblige, *or any thing* to determine us to *external Communion*, it will be to no purpoſe to ſay, that you do not mean *Communion* with the Church of Chriſt in *general*, but only with any *particular* part of Chriſt's Church; for I have ſhown that this Diſtinction is *falſe*, and fully as *abſurd*, as to imagine, that we may be obliged to obey Chriſt's Commands in *general*, but not be obliged to obey his *particular* Commands.

From

From what has been ſaid upon this Subject, theſe following Propoſitions are plainly true:

Firſt; That as our entering into any particular part of the Church, implies our entering into the Church of Chriſt, or in other Words, our embracing Chriſtianity; it evidently follows, that the *ſame* Authority which requires us to embrace *Chriſtianity*, requires us alſo to enter into that ſound *part* of Chriſt's Church where we live.

Secondly; That this Authority does not ariſe from any *human* Laws, or the Power which any Men in what Station ſoever have over others, but is the Authority of God, who has inſtituted this Church, in order to oblige all Mankind to enter into it.

Thirdly; That this Authority from God, may be very properly called *Church Authority*, becauſe God manifeſted this Authority to the World by the *Inſtitution* of the Church, becauſe it began with the Church, and flowed from its very Nature; Mankind being therefore obliged to enter into this Church, becauſe there was ſuch a Church *inſtituted* by God.

Fourthly; That this Account does not in the leaſt make it either *unjuſt* or *improper*, in our *ſpiritual* or *temporal* Governours, to make Laws for our Conformity to this or that part of Chriſt's Church; for though the Authority which makes it neceſſary that we

ſhould

ſhould enter into ſuch a *part* of Chriſt's Church, is from God, yet this no more excludes our Governours from requiring the *ſame thing* by their *Laws*, than they are excluded from requiring us to obſerve any *moral Duties*, becauſe the *ſame moral Duties* are made neceſſary by the Authority of God. And as our Violation of any *moral Duties* that are commanded, both by Divine and Human Laws, receives an higher Aggravation, ſo the Guilt of oppoſing any ſound part of Chriſt's Church is enhanced, by our breaking through the Laws both of God and Man.

Fifthly; From this Account of the Authority which obliges us to external Communion, it will be very eaſy to diſcover the *Weakneſs* and *Fallacy* of ſeveral of your Lordſhip's Arguments upon this Matter.

Thus when you ſay, *It is evident that there is no Choice of Judgment left to Chriſtians, where there is a ſuperior Authority to oblige them*;——*that in* Italy, *or* Spain, *or* France, *they are as much obliged by the Church Authority in* Italy, Spain, *or* France, *as Chriſtians in* England *are obliged to a particular external Communion in* England, *by any human Authority, as ſuch, in* England *.

Now, my Lord, what could you have thought of leſs to the Purpoſe, than theſe Words thus put together? For does any one

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 115.

ſay,

ſay, that our Obligation to be of the Church of *England*, ariſes from any *human* Authority, *as ſuch*, in *England*? No, my Lord, if *human* Authority ſhould not only deſert the Church, but make the ſevereſt Laws againſt it, yet we ſhould be ſtill under the ſame Neceſſity of communicating with it; becauſe that Neceſſity is independent of *human* Laws, is founded upon the Authority of God, and conſtantly obliges in the *ſame Degree*, let the Laws of the *State* be what they will.

Granting therefore, my Lord, that the *human* Authority, *as ſuch*, in *France* or *Spain*, obliges the People of thoſe Kingdom to conform to thoſe Churches, as truly as the Laws of *England* oblige the People of *England* to conform to the Church of *England*. What follows? Does it follow that therefore the People of *France* or *Spain* are as truly obliged to Communion with the Church in thoſe Kingdoms, as the People of *England* are obliged to Communion with the Church in *England*? No, this will by no means follow; for ſince we ſhould hold the ſame Neceſſity of joining with the *Epiſcopal* Church in *England*, though all the human Laws in *England* ſhould forbid us; ſince we allow only an *accidental* and *conditional* Authority in *human* Laws as they eſtabliſh any particular Religion, it follows, that in *France* and *Spain*, &c. they ought to pay the *ſame* regard to *human* Laws, and no more continue in their Church

becauſe

becauſe it is *eſtabliſhed*, than we ought to leave our Church though it was *perſecuted*. The ſhort is this:

The *Church Authority* which obliges us to external Communion with any *particular* part of Chriſt's Church, is that *ſame divine* Authority which calls upon us to be *baptized*, and enter into *Covenant* with God.

Now if *human* Laws, whether of *Church* or *State*, ſtrike in with this Authority, then they oblige us, as they do in other Caſes, where they require us to do that, which the *Laws* of God required before; but if *human* Laws, whether of *Church* or *State*, require us to enter into *ſuch* a Communion, as hath not the *Authority* of Chriſt for it, or forbid our joining with *ſuch* a Communion as is a *true part* of Chriſt's Church, ſuch Laws are no more to be obſerved, than if they had eſtabliſhed *Idolatry*, or forbid the Worſhip of the *true* God. For *human* Laws are not ſuppoſed to make it our *Duty* to enter into ſuch a Communion, but are applied as proper *means* to induce us to do that, which the *Laws* of God had made it our *Duty* to do before. And it is undeniably true, that though there ſhould be ever ſo many *human* Laws to command us to enter into any particular Communion, that we muſt not comply with ſuch Laws, unleſs it be in regard to *ſuch* a Communion, as it was our *Duty* to enter into, though no ſuch *human* Laws were in being.

So

So that *human* Laws create no *Neceſſity* of external Communion, any more than they create the *Neceſſity* of *praying* to God; but they may be applied as very *proper means* to induce People to perform the *Duty* of *external* Communion, and to perform the Duty of *Prayer* to God.

The Queſtion therefore in any *Country* is not this, whether the Laws either of their *Church* or *State* require us to enter in *ſuch* a Communion, but whether it be *ſuch* a Communion, as it would be our *Duty* to enter into, were there no *human* Laws to enjoin it, whether it be a *part* of Chriſt's Church, which we are obliged to enter into on Pain of everlaſting Damnation.

When therefore you ſay, if the People of *England* are obliged by an *human* Authority, *as ſuch*, to enter into the Church of *England*, then the People of *France*, *Spain* and *Italy*, are as truly obliged by the human Authority there to enter into thoſe particular Communions; you ſay exceedingly true, but to no more purpoſe, than if you had made the following Declaration.

If the People of *England* are obliged to enter into Communion with the Church of *England* by any *Military* Authority, *as ſuch*; then the People of *France*, *Spain*, and *Italy*, are obliged to Communion with the Churches in *Spain*, *France*, and *Italy*, by the *Military* Authority, *as ſuch*, in *Spain*, *France*, and *Italy*.

This,

This, my Lord, is as much to the Purpoſe as what you have ſaid; for our *Obligation* to enter into a particular Part of Chriſt's Church, is no more founded in any *human* Laws, *as ſuch*, than in any *Military* Authority, *as ſuch*; but is founded in the Will of God, who has inſtituted the Church on Earth, and made our Salvation depend upon our Entrance into it. This is the *Authority* which obliges, this is the *Neceſſity* which lies upon us, to enter into any Part of Chriſt's Church.

If therefore you would ſhow, that in *Spain*, or *France*, &c. they are under the *ſame Neceſſity* of being of the Church in thoſe Kingdoms, which the People of *England* are of being Members of the *Epiſcopal* Church in *England*; you ought to ſhow that the *Eſtabliſhed* Church in *Spain*, or in *France*, is as truly a *ſound* Part of the Church of Chriſt, as the *Eſtabliſhed* Church in *England* is a ſound Part of the Church of Chriſt; and that the way of Worſhip *there*, is as certainly that *neceſſary Method* of Salvation which Chriſt has *inſtituted*, as the way of Worſhip in the Church of *England*, is that *neceſſary Method* of Salvation which Chriſt has inſtituted.

For this is the only *Authority* or *Neceſſity*, which obliges us to enter into any *Church* in any Part of the World; namely, a *Neceſſity* of being Chriſtians, by entering into that Church which Chriſt has inſtituted; ſo that

if

if this same Church be in *Spain*, and *France*, and *England*, then there is an *equal* Neceſſity of being of the Church in each Kingdom; but if the Church in *Spain* be not the Church which Chriſt has *inſtituted*, and the Church in *England* be that Church which Chriſt has *inſtituted*, then there is as great a *Neceſſity* of *refuſing* to communicate with the Church in *Spain*, as of joining in Communion with the Church of *England*.

This therefore being the Nature of the *Authority* or *Neceſſity* which obliges to external Communion, nothing can be more trifling, than to argue from the *Neceſsity* of complying with the Church in *one* Kingdom, to a *Neceſsity* of complying with the Church in *all other* Kingdoms; unleſs you could *demonſtrate*, that becauſe the *Eſtabliſhed* Church in one Kingdom is the true Church of Chriſt, therefore the *Eſtabliſhed* Church in *every other* Kingdom is the true Church of Chriſt.

Yet your Lordſhip has ſpent a great many Pages, in declaiming againſt any *Authority* or *Neceſsity* which can oblige People to communicate with the Church of *England*; becauſe then there would be the *ſame Neceſsity* that the People of *Spain*, and *France*, and *Italy*, ſhould communicate with the Church in thoſe Kingdoms. But I hope the moſt ordinary Reader will be able to tell your Lordſhip, that there is no more *good Senſe*, much leſs *Divinity*, in this way of inſtructing the World,

World, than if you had ſaid, there is no *Neceſsity* that the People of *England* ſhould believe things which are *true*, becauſe then the People of *Spain* will be under the *ſame Neceſſity* of believing things which are *falſe*; and again, that there is no *Neceſsity* that in *this* Kingdom we ſhould comply with *good Laws*, becauſe in *other* Kingdoms People will be under the *ſame Neceſsity* of complying with *wicked Laws*.

But to conclude this Point; I have here ſtated the Nature of that *Authority* or *Neceſſity* which obliges us to external Communion, that it does not ariſe from the *Laws* of any Men, whether in *Church* or *State*, but from the Will and Authority of Chriſt, who has inſtituted ſuch external Communion, as a *neceſſary Method* of Salvation.

I have ſhown alſo, that *human Laws*, though they, *as ſuch*, do not create a Neceſſity of external Communion, yet they have a very proper *Significancy*, and are as uſeful in this Matter, as in any other Parts of our Duty.

Of Sincerity and Private Judgement.

IF you ſhould here ſay, that by denying the Neceſſity of external Communion to ariſe from *human* Laws, *as ſuch*, I have reſolved the Choice of a particular Communion into *private Judgement*.

To this I anſwer;

Firſt; That by entering into any *particular Communion*, we are to underſtand the *ſame thing* as entering into the *Church of Chriſt*, or embracing the Religion which Chriſt has *inſtituted*.

Secondly; That when Chriſt came into the World, People were left to their choice, whether they would embrace Chriſtianity.

Thirdly; That Chriſtianity is ſtill upon the *ſame Terms* with Mankind, and it is ſtill left to every one's private Judgment, whether he will comply with the Terms of Salvation.

Fourthly; That this does not deſtroy the *Force* and *Obligations* of Authority, or make it without any Effect upon the Condition of Men. For it does by no means follow, that there is *no Authority*, or that there are *no Effects* to be feared from ſuch Authority, be-

cauſe Men may diſown it if they pleaſe. For to ſay there is *nothing* in Authority, that it is inſignificant and without *any Effect* upon the Condition of Men, if they may uſe their *private Judgements*, is as *ridiculous* as to ſay, there is *nothing* in the Happineſs of *Heaven*, or Torments of *Hell*, that they can have *no Effect* upon the Condition of Men, becauſe Men may *judge* of theſe things as they pleaſe.

Fifthly; There is a Choice of Judgment left to us in every Part of our Duty;

Whether we will believe a God,

Whether we will worſhip him,

Whether we will believe in *Jeſus Chriſt*,

Whether we will acknowledge a World to come,

Whether we will believe there is ſuch a Place as Hell.

And now, my Lord, is there *no Authority* for theſe things, becauſe we are not forced to believe them againſt our *Judgements?* Have thoſe who refuſed to believe in Chriſt, nothing to fear from his *Authority*, becauſe he appealed to their *Reaſon*, and left them to *determine* for themſelves? Is there no *Authority* for the Torments of *Hell*, or nothing to be feared from that *Authority*, by thoſe who deny there is any ſuch Place.

Now if there can be an *Authority* in theſe Matters, though the Uſe of *private Judgement* is allowed in theſe *ſame* Matters, if this Authority

thority will condemn those who acted contrary to it; then it is certain, that there may be an *Authority* or *Necessity* which obliges us to be of such a *particular* Religion, though the Exercise of our private Judgment is allowed in the Choice of our Religion; and that we may have as much to fear from acting contrary to such *Authority*, though by following our own Opinions, as they have who act contrary to the Will of God in any other Respect, though by following their own Opinions.

So that an *Authority* or *Necessity* which obliges us to be of this or that *particular Communion*, that is, particular Religion, is as consistent with the Exercise of *private Judgement*, as the Necessity of believing a God, and worshipping him, is consistent with the Exercise of our *private Judgement*.

And if you will say, there is an end of all Authority, if Men may chuse one Communion before another; you must also say, that if Men might consider whether they should follow Christ, then there was an end of all Authority in Christ over them.

And again; If Men may reason and consider whether there be a God, or Providence, then there is an end of all Necessity of believing either a God, or Providence.

If they may *consider* whether the Scriptures are the *Word* of God, or any *particular* Doctrines be contained in Scripture, then there is an end of *all Necessity* of believing the

Scriptures to be the *Word* of God, or of believing any *particular* Doctrines to be contained in Scripture.

If they may consider and examine whether any *particular* Religion comes from God, then there is an end of *all Necessity* of receiving any particular Religion from God.

All this Reasoning is full as just, as to conclude that there is an *end of all Authority* to *oblige People to any* particular Communion, if they may consider the Excellency of one Communion above another, which is what you over and over declare.

Now, my Lord, let us suppose that the Question was, Whether it be *necessary* to believe the *Scriptures* to be the *Word* of God? Would it not become every honest Man, not only to assert this *Necessity*, but to show wherein it is founded, and explain to every one that *Authority*, which calls upon us to receive the Scriptures as the Word of God, and which will rise up in *Judgment* against us, if neglected.

And what might we not justly think of him, who, instead of showing the *Authority* or Necessity which obliges us to receive the Scriptures as the Word of God, should deliver himself in this manner.

" You are reasoning whether there be a-
" ny *Authority* or *Necessity* which obliges
" you to receive the *Scriptures* as the *Word*
" of God. Whereas your very Reasoning

" upon

" upon this Matter, ſhows there is no Neceſ-
" ſity or *Authority* to which you are obliged
" to ſubmit. For ſince you are allowed to
" reaſon and enquire whether this be neceſ-
" ſary, it is certain, there is an end of all Au-
" thority or Neceſſity, to oblige you to re-
" ceive the *Scriptures as the Word* of God;
" and if you do but ſincerely follow your
" own private Perſuaſions, you are intitled
" to the ſame Degrees of God's Favour, whe-
" ther you receive the Scriptures as his Word
" or not."

Now, my Lord, thus it is that you have inſtructed the World, in relation to the Authority which obliges us to *external Communion.*

The Queſtion is, Whether there be any Authority which obliges us to any *particular external Communion?*

Now, my Lord, what has any one to do in this Diſpute, but to ſhow whether Chriſt has *inſtituted* external Communion, or not? For on this alone muſt the Neceſſity of it depend. And if it appears that external Communion be inſtituted by our Saviour as a Method of Salvation, then it will follow, that we are under a *Neceſſity*, as we hope for Salvation, of being in that particular Method or Manner of external Communion, which Chriſt has inſtituted; ſo that unleſs it can be ſhown, that all *pretended* Chriſtian Communions, are as truly that *Method*, or particular Communion

which Chriſt has inſtituted, as any other Communion is; it muſt be as neceſſary to be in ſome *one particular* Communion, as it is neceſſary to obey Chriſt; and as dangerous to join in ſome other Communions, as it is dangerous to deſpiſe his Authority.

But now your Lordſhip, inſtead of conſidering what external Communion is *inſtituted*, and what *Neceſſity* ariſes from ſuch *Inſtitution*, or where we may find ſuch external Communion, amongſt the many *pretended* Chriſtian Communions, has wholly paſſed over this Point, and determined the Queſtion, by telling us, that ſince we are allowed the Uſe of our Reaſon in the Choice of Religion, it matters not what *Authority* we oppoſe, either of God or Man, and that there can be no *Neceſſity* of our being of any *particular* Communion, but where our private Judgment *ſincerely* directs us

Thus you ſay; *If the Excellency of one Communion above another may be regarded, then there is an End of all human Authority to oblige us to one particular external Communion* *. And to ſhow that you can as eaſily deſtroy all *Divine* Authority or Neceſſity of any *particular Communion*, or Religion, you tell us, that *our Title to God's Favour cannot depend upon our actual being or continuing in any* particular Method, *but upon*

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 115.

our

our real Sincerity *. So that here the *Sincerity* of *private Judgment* as effectually deſtroys all *divine Authority* and *Neceſſity* of any particular Communion or Religion, as it deſtroys that which is *human*; and we are rendered as *happy* and as *high* in the *Favour* of God, for *breaking* his Laws, as if we had *obſerved* them.

For here it is proved, that there is no *Neceſſity* of any particular Communion or Religion, not becauſe there is none *inſtituted* by God, but becauſe, whether inſtituted or not, our *ſincere Perſuaſion* will equally juſtify us, whether it complies with or oppoſes ſuch Inſtitution.

But to proceed.

I ſhall now ſhow, how this Doctrine of yours of *Sincerity* expoſes all the *Terms* of Salvation as delivered in Scripture.

In the Scripture we find that *Baptiſm* is made a *Term* of Salvation; but if *Sincerity without* Baptiſm be as *certain* a *Title* to the Favour of God, as *Sincerity* with Baptiſm, then it is plain, that *not to be baptized*, is as much a *Condition* or *Term* of Salvation, as *Baptiſm* is a *Term* of Salvation. For, if Baptiſm *with* Sincerity was *more* a Term or Condition of God's Favour, than *no Baptiſm* with Sincerity, then it is certain that it is not *Sincerity alone* that procures the Favour of

* *Preſerv.* p. 90.

God: And it is as certain, that if Sincerity alone procures us the Favour of God, then *Baptiſm* is no *more* a *Term* of Salvation, than the *Refuſal of Baptiſm* is a *Term* of Salvation. So that this Doctrine makes *Baptiſm*, and the *Refuſal* of Baptiſm, either equally *Terms*, or equally *no Terms* of Salvation; equally *advantagious*, or equally *inſignificant*.

When therefore our Bleſſed Saviour ſays, that except we are *baptiſed* we cannot enter into the Kingdom of God *, and he that is not *baptized* ſhall be *damned*; according to this Doctrine of yours, we may alſo ſay juſt the contrary, that except we *refuſe* Baptiſm we cannot enter into the Kingdom of God; and he that is *baptized* ſhall be *damned*.

This, my Lord, is very ſhocking; but I ſhall eaſily ſhow that theſe Aſſertions are as *proper* and as *juſt*, as the contrary Aſſertions, if your Doctrine of Sincerity be right.

For, ſince your Doctrine puts the ſincere *Acceptance*, and the ſincere *Refuſal* of Baptiſm, upon the ſame Foot as to the *Favour* of God, there can be no more Danger in ſincerely *refuſing* Baptiſm, than in ſincerely *accepting* of Baptiſm. Now if there is no more Danger in the *one* Practice than in the *other*, it muſt be plain to the moſt ordinary Underſtanding, that it is as *juſt* and *proper* to de-

* *Joh.* 3. 3.

clare

clare *one* Practice dangerous as the *other*; that is, it must be as proper to say, he that *is* baptized shall be *damned*, as to say, he that is *not* baptized shall be *damned*.

Now I know your Lordship cannot, upon these Principles, show, that it is more dangerous to *refuse* Baptism sincerely, than to *receive* Baptism sincerely; and so long as this is granted, you must allow that it is as just to fix danger upon *Baptism itself*, as upon the *want* of Baptism. And consequently, all your Reasonings upon this Subject are one continued Censure upon our Blessed Saviour's Doctrine in relation to Baptism, which according to your Notions, is only as *just* and *proper*, as the quite contrary would have been.

Again, our Saviour tells us, that *except we eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, we have no Life in us* *.

Here we see, the *eating* the Flesh and *drinking* the Blood of the Son of Man is an *instituted Term* of Salvation, and insisted upon by our Saviour; but if your Doctrine be true, we may as well declare the *contrary* to be a *Term* of Salvation, and say, *except we sincerely refuse to eat the Flesh and drink the Blood of the Son of Man, we have no Life in us.*

For, my Lord, if Sincerity in *refusing* to eat this Flesh, be the *same Title* to God's Favour that the *eating* of it with Sincerity is,

* *John* 6.

it

it is plain, there is no more Advantage *in eating*, than in *not eating*; and consequently it is as well to say, that except we *forbear* eating the Flesh of the Son of Man we have no Life in us, as to say, that except we *eat* the Flesh of the Son of Man we have no Life in us; there being plainly from this Doctrine, no more Danger in *forbearing* to eat, than in *eating*; nor any more Necessity of eating, than of forbearing to eat, since both these Practices are *equally good* and *advantagious* with *Sincerity*, and *equally* bad and insignificant without it.

And now, my Lord, let the World judge, whether you could have thought of a Doctrine more *contradictory* to the express Words of our Saviour, and all the *instituted Terms* of Salvation, than this of yours about Sincerity, which makes it no more *necessary* to *observe* the *instituted Terms* of Salvation, than to *break* them; and which also makes it as proper, to declare it as *dangerous* to *observe* such Institutions, as to *reject* them. This I have shown particularly in Baptism, where your Doctrine makes it as proper to say, he that *is baptized* shall be *damned*, as to say, that he who is *not* baptized shall be *damned*; and in the same manner does it contradict and confound the Scriptures, and make the *contrary* to every *Institution* as *much* a Means of Salvation, as the *Institution* itself.

Your

Your Lordſhip has given us a *Demonſtration*, as you call it, that your Doctrine of *Sincerity* and private *Perſuaſion* is right.

Thus you aſk: *What is it that juſtified the Proteſtants —— in ſetting up their own Biſhops? Was it, that the Popiſh Doctrines were actually corrupt, or that the Proteſtants were perſuaded in their own Conſciences, that they were ſo? The latter without doubt.* And then comes your *Demonſtration*, in this manner; *take away from them this Perſuaſion, and they are ſo far from being juſtified, that they are condemned for their Departure; give them this Perſuaſion again, they are condemned if they do not ſeparate* *.

You want to be ſhown the Fallacy in this Demonſtration, which I hope I ſhall ſhow to your Satisfaction.

It is granted, that Corruption in Religion is no *Juſtification* of thoſe who leave it, unleſs they are perſuaded of that Corruption.

It is alſo granted, that they who are fully perſuaded that a Religion is *ſinful*, are obliged to ſeparate from it, though it ſhould not be *ſinful*. But then it does by no means follow, that they who leave a *true* Religion, and they who leave a *falſe* Religion, through their particular Perſuaſions, are *equally juſti-*

* *Preſer.* p. 85. *Anſw. to Rep.* p. 103.

fied,

fied, or have an equal Title to the *ſame Degree* of God's Favour.

Here lies the *great Fallacy* in this Argument, that you uſe the ſame Word (*viz. juſtified)* in relation to both theſe People in the very *ſame Senſe*; whereas if they are *juſtified* (if this Word muſt be uſed) it is in a very different *Senſe* and different *Meaſure*, and they are not entitled to the *ſame Degree* of God's Favour. Now, a Fallacy in this Point deſtroys the whole Demonſtration, for the Queſtion wholly turns upon *this Point*, Whether they who are ſincere in a *true* Religion, and they who are ſincere in a *falſe* Religion, are *equally* juſtified and entitled to the *ſame Degrees* of God's Favour?

This very Thing was objected to you by the learned *Committee*, who ſaid, *that an erroneous Conſcience was never, till now, allowed* wholly *to juſtify Men in their Errors* *.

To which you have no better Anſwer to make than this, *That it muſt either juſtify them, or not juſtify them. It muſt either* wholly *juſtify them, or not juſtify them* at all †.

My Lord, I ſuppoſe a Man is juſtified by his living *ſoberly*, *righteouſly*, and *godlily* in this preſent World. I aſk therefore, Does his

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* *Rep.* p. 7. † *Anſw. to Repr.* p 95.

living

living *ſoberly* juſtify him wholly, or does it not juſtify him *at all?* If it juſtifies him *wholly*, then there is no occaſion of his living *righteouſly* and *godlily*; if it does not juſtify him *at all*, then there is no need of his living *ſoberly*.

Your Anſwer to the *Committee* has juſt as much *Senſe* or *Divinity* in it, as there is in this Argument.

Here I muſt deſire, that it may be obſerved, that the Queſtion is not, Whether *Sincerity* in *any* Religion, does not recommend us to the Favour of God? But whether we are entitled to the *ſame Degrees* of God's Favour, whether we are ſincere in a *true* or *falſe* way of Worſhip?

I ſhall therefore farther conſider this Point.

Firſt; If *true* and *right* Religion hath any thing in its own Nature to recommend us to God, then Sincerity in this *true* and *right* Religion muſt recommend us *more* to God, than Sincerity in a *falſe* and *wrong* Religion; becauſe we have a Recommendation from our *Religion*, as well as from our *Sincerity* in it. For inſtance, if it be in *any Degree* in the World more acceptable to God, that we ſhould follow *Chriſt*, than *Mahomet*, our Sincerity in following *Chriſt*, muſt recommend us to juſt *ſo much* more of God's Favour, than our Sincerity in following *Mahomet*; as it is more acceptable to him that we

we ſhould follow one than the other. Now to ſay that *true* and *right* Religion, has nothing in its own Nature to recommend us to God, is ſaying, that things *true* and *right* are no more acceptable to God, than things *falſe* and *wrong*; but as it would be Blaſphemy to ſay this, ſo it is very little leſs, to ſay, that Sincerity in a *falſe* and *wrong* Religion, is juſt the *ſame Juſtification* or *Recommendation* to the Favour of God, that Sincerity in the *true* and *right* Religion is.

Farther; The whole *End* and *Deſign* of Religion, is to *recommend* us to the Favour of God. If therefore we can ſuppoſe a Religion *inſtituted* by God, which does no more, as ſuch, recommend us to the Favour of God, than a Religion *invented* by *Men* or *Devils*, as *ſuch*, recommends us to the Favour of God; then we muſt alſo ſuppoſe, that God has inſtituted a Religion, which does not *at all* anſwer the general *End* and *Deſign* of Religion, *viz.* the *recommending* us to the Favour of God.

Unleſs therefore we will prophanely declare, that God has inſtituted a Religion, which, *as ſuch*, does us no Service, nor any better promotes the general *End* of Religion, than any corrupt *Inventions* of Men, we muſt affirm, that Sincerity in his Religion will entitle us to greater Degrees of his Favour, than Sincerity in a Religion not from Him.

Secondly;

Secondly; If there be any *real Excellency* or *Goodneſs* in one Religion, which is not in another, then it is certain, that *Sincerity* does not *equally* juſtify us in any Religion; and on the contrary, it is as certain, that if Sincerity in *any* Religion does entitle us to the *ſame Degrees* of God's Favour, then there is no ſuch thing as any real *Excellency* or *Goodneſs* in one Religion, which is not in another.

When you are charged with deſtroying all Difference between Religions, by this Account of Sincerity, you retreat to an Anſwer as weak as could poſſibly have been thought of. Thus you ſay; *What I ſaid about* private Perſuaſion, *relates to the* Juſtification *of the Man before God, and not to the* Excellency *of one Communion above another, which it leaves juſt as it found it* *.

Here, my Lord, you ſuppoſe that one Religion may very much exceed another Religion in *Goodneſs* and *Excellency*, and yet that this *Goodneſs* and *Excellency* has nothing to do with the *Juſtification* of Perſons; for you ſay, you was not ſpeaking of the *Excellency* of one Communion above another, but of what relates to the *Juſtification* of a Man, *&c.* which plainly ſhows, that you do not allow the *Excellency* of Religion to have any thing to do with the Juſtification of Men; for if

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 113.

you

you did, it must have been necessary to speak of the *Excellency* of one Religion above another, when you was speaking of what it is which *justifies* a Man before God.

Now, my Lord, to grant that there is an *Excellency* and *Goodness* in some Religion, and yet exclude this *excellent* and *good* Religion, from having any more in it to *justify* and *recommend* us to the Favour of God, than what is to be found in any other Religion less excellent; is just as *good Sense*, as to allow, that some Food is *much more* excellent and proper than other Food; and yet exclude this *most excellent proper* Food, from having any thing in it to preserve *Health* and *Strength*, more than in *any other* Food.

For the *Goodness* and *Excellency* of Religion, is as *truly* a *relative* Goodness and Excellency, as the Goodness and Excellency of Food is a *relative* Goodness and Excellency. And as that Food can only be said to be *better* than another Food, because it has a *better* Effect upon the Body than any other Food; so that Religion can only be said to be *better* than another, because it raises us higher in the Favour of God than any other Religion.

It is therefore most certain, that if any one Religion can be said to be *better* than another, it must be, because one Religion may be of more Advantage to us than another.

For

For as Religion in general is *good*, becauſe it does us *good*, and brings us into Favour with God; ſo the *particular Excellency* and *Goodneſs* of any Religion, muſt conſiſt in this, that it does us a *more particular Good*, and raiſes us to *higher* Degrees of God's Favour, than a *leſs excellent* Religion would have done.

So that when your Lordſhip talks of the *Excellency* of one Religion above another, as having nothing in it, *as ſuch*, to recommend us to higher Degrees of God's Favour, or effect our *Juſtification*; it is full as abſurd, as to ſay, that though one kind of *Learning* may be more *excellent* than another kind of *Learning*, yet no Men are more *excellent* or *valuable*, for having one kind of *Learning* rather than another.

For as no kind of Learning can be ſaid to be *peculiarly* excellent, but becauſe it gives ſome *peculiar Excellency* to thoſe who are Maſters of it; ſo no kind of Religion can be ſaid to be *more excellent* than another, unleſs thoſe who profeſs it, reap ſome *Advantage* from it, which is not to be had from a Religion *leſs excellent*.

From all this it appears, firſt, that there can be no ſuch thing as any *Goodneſs* or *Excellency* in one Religion above another, but as it procures a *peculiar Good* and *Advantage* to thoſe who profeſs it.

Secondly; That your Lordſhip can allow no other *Goodneſs* or *Excellency* in Religion, even from your own expreſs Words, but what implies as great an Abſurdity, as to allow of good *Food*, good *Learning*, or good *Advice*, which can do no body any good *at all*.

For ſince you expreſsly exclude the *Goodneſs* or *Excellency* of any Religion, from having any part in recommending us to the Favour of God, and will only allow it to carry us ſo far, as Sincerity in a *worſe* Religion will carry us; it is certain, that this *good* and *excellent* Religion, is juſt as good as *that*, which does us no good *at all*.

So that whether you will yet own that you have deſtroyed all the difference betwixt Religions, or not, I cannot tell; yet I imagine, every one will ſee that you have only left ſuch a *Goodneſs* in one Religion above another, as can do no body any good *at all*.

The ſhort is this; If you will own there is no *Excellency* in one Religion above another, then you are guilty of making *Chriſtianity* no better than *Mahometaniſm*; but if you will acknowledge a *Goodneſs* and *Excellency* in one Religion above another, and yet contend that it is *Sincerity alone*, which does us *any Good*, or recommends us to the Favour of God, in all Religions alike, this is as abſurd, as to ſay, ſuch a thing is *much better* for us than any other thing, and yet aſſert, that *any other* thing will do us *as much good* as that.

I have,

I have, I hope, ſufficiently confuted *your* Doctrine of Sincerity, from the Nature of Religion. I ſhall now, in a word or two, examine it farther, by conſidering the Nature of *Private Perſuaſion*, which can do all theſe mighty things.

And, firſt, I deny that *Perſuaſion* was the *only* thing which juſtified the Proteſtants, or which recommends People to the Favour of God in the Choice of a Religion; and that, becauſe if their *private Perſuaſion* was founded in *Pride*, *Prejudice*, *worldly Intereſt*, or *any thing*, but the *real Truth*, and the *Juſtice* of the Cauſe, that their *private Perſuaſion* did not *juſtify* them before God; nor had they, upon this Suppoſition, ſo good a Title to his Favour, as thoſe who did not reform.

If you ſay, that Perſons cannot be *ſincere* in their Perſuaſions, who are influenced by *Pride*, or *Prejudice*, or any *falſe* Motive: To this I anſwer;

Firſt; That according to your *own Principles*, that Man is to be eſteemed *ſincere*, who *thinks* himſelf to be *ſincere*. For, as it is a firſt *Principle* with you, that a Man is *juſtified* in point of Religion, not becauſe he obſerves what in its own Nature is *true* and *right* Religion, but becauſe he obſerves that which he *thinks* to be *true* and *right* Religion; ſo according to *this Principle*, a Man is to be accounted *ſincere*, not becauſe

he acts up to *true* and *juſt* Principles of *Sincerity*, but becauſe he *thinks* in his own Mind, that he does act up to ſuch *juſt* and *true* Principles of Sincerity. So that, my Lord, Sincerity it ſeems is as truly a *private Perſuaſion*, as Religion is a *private* Perſuaſion; and therefore any one may as eaſily think himſelf *truly* ſincere, and yet not have true Sincerity, as he may think himſelf in the *true* Religion, and yet not be in the true Religion.

Unleſs therefore you will maintain, that a Perſon who is miſtaken in his *Sincerity*, and miſtaken in his *Religion* too, who hath neither *true* Religion, or true *Sincerity*, hath as good a Title to the Favour of God as he who is *truly* ſincere, and in a *true* Religion, you muſt give up this *Cauſe* of Sincerity. For it is *demonſtrable* from your *own Principles*, that any one may as often happen to be miſtaken in his Sincerity, and take that for *Sincerity* which is not Sincerity, as he may he miſtaken in his *Religion*, and take that for *Religion* which is not *Religion*.

And conſequently it is as reaſonable to talk of *ſincere* Perſons who are influenced by *wrong Motives*, as to talk of Perſons being *juſtified* in Religion, who live in a *falſe* Religion.

So that, my Lord, this is the Reſult of your Doctrine, that Perſons neither *truly* ſincere, nor in the *true* Religion, are yet entitled

tled to the *ſame Degrees* of God's Favour, with thoſe who are *truly* ſincere in the *true* Religion.

The ſhort is this, according to a Maxim of your own, you are obliged to acknowledge that Man to be *ſincere*, who *thinks* himſelf to be *ſincere*; becauſe you ſay a Man is to be eſteemed Religious, not becauſe he practiſes *true* Religion, but becauſe he *thinks* he practiſes *true* Religion; therefore you muſt ſay, that a Man is ſincere, not becauſe he is *truly* ſincere, but becauſe he *thinks* himſelf to be *ſincere*.

It is alſo as *poſſible* and as *likely* for a Man to be miſtaken in thoſe things which conſtitute *true* Sincerity, as in thoſe things which conſtitute *true* Religion.

And therefore if *this* Sincerity be the *only* and the *ſame* Title to God's Favour in any Religion, it follows, that Sincerity, though influenced by *falſe* Motives, and in a falſe way of Worſhip, is as acceptable to God, as a *ſincere* Perſuaſion governed by *right* Motives, in a *true* and *inſtituted* way of Worſhip.

So that all the fine things which you have ſaid of Sincerity, as implying in it all which is *rational* and *excellent*, are come to nothing; and you are as ſtrictly obliged to allow that Man to be *ſincere*, who miſtakes the *Grounds* and *Principles* of *true* Sincerity, becauſe he *thinks* himſelf to be ſincere, as to allow that Perſon to be juſtified in his Reli-

gion, who miſtakes the true Religion, becauſe he thinks himſelf in the true Religion.

So that it is not *Sincerity*, as it contains all that is *rational* and *excellent* which alone juſtifies, but as it may be an *idle*, *vain*, *whimſical* Perſuaſion, in which People think themſelves in the right. This Perſuaſion, though founded in the Follies, Paſſions, and Prejudices of human Nature, conſecrates every Way of Worſhip, and makes the Man thus perſuaded as acceptable to God, as he who through a right uſe of his Reaſon, ſerves God in that Method which he has *inſtituted*.

I ſhall end this Point with only this Obſervation, that however hearty a Friend you may be to the Chriſtian Religion your ſelf, this I dare ſay, that the heartieſt *Enemy* it has, will thank you for thus *defending* it. And they who wiſh all the Diſtinctions betwixt Religions confounded, and maintain that we have nothing to hope or fear but from our *own Perſuaſions*, are the only Perſons who can call you their *proper Defender*.

Of the Reformation.

I Proceed now, in a Word or two, to ſhow, that the *Neceſſity* of Communion with any *particular* Church, and the *Effects* of Excommunication, are perfectly conſiſtent with the Principles of the *Reformation*.

You ſay, *If there be a Church Authority to oblige People to external Communion,—— I beg to know, How* can the *Reformation itſelf be juſtified?——For there was then an Order of Church-men, veſted with all ſpiritual Authority;——there was therefore a Church Authority to oblige Chriſtians, a Power of ſome over others. What was it therefore to which we owe this very Church of* England *?

To this it may be anſwered,

Firſt; That this Argument proceeds upon a falſe Suppoſition, namely, that it is the *Laws* of *any Men*, which obliges us to *external Communion*. Which I have already ſhown to be as falſe, as to ſuppoſe that it is the *Laws* of *any* Men which obliges us to be *Chriſtians*.

* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 118.

Secondly; That there may be a *real* and a *great* Authority which obliges us to *external Communion*, though this Authority be not founded in any *human Laws*; for there is as real and apparent an Authority for *Baptiſm* and the *Supper* of the Lord, and other Parts of external Communion, as if they were the expreſs Matter of any human Laws.

Thirdly; That the Laws of Men in this Affair of Religion, are of the ſame Obligation and Force that they are in other Matters. If they command Things indifferent, they are to be obeyed for the Authority of the Command; if they enjoin Things in their own Nature good, the Neceſſity of Obedience is greater; but if they command Things unlawful, we are not to comply, but obey God rather than Man.

Fourthly; The Queſtion therefore at the *Reformation* was not, Whether the *Laws* of the *Pope* or the *Prince* were on the ſide of the Church of *Rome?* But whether that *Faith* and thoſe *Inſtitutions* which conſtitute the Chriſtian Religion, were with the *Reformers*, or with the *Papiſts*. For the Church Authority which obliged *them then*, and which obliges now to external Communion, was not an Authority which obliged them to comply with any *number* of Biſhops, or any *State Laws*, but to enter into Communion with that Biſhop or Biſhops, who obſerved that way of Worſhip which Chriſt had inſtituted. The

Neceſ-

Neceſſity of being in external Communion, does not oblige us to be in Communion with the *Pope* or any *Number* of Biſhops *as ſuch*, whoſe Authority we may happen to be born under; but it obliges us to be in that Communion, which is that *Way* or *Method* of Salvation which Chriſt has *inſtituted*.

So that though we ſhould grant, that at the *Reformation* we broke through the *human* Laws of the *Church*, which required us to continue in Communion with the Church of *Rome*, it will by no means follow, that we broke through *that Authority* which obliges us to external Communion, becauſe *that Authority* is not founded in any *human Laws*, but is the Authority of Chriſt, requiring us to obſerve all thoſe things which conſtitute *external Communion*. For as it is the Authority of Chriſt which obliges us to be *Chriſtians*, ſo that ſame Authority obliges us to enter into that Communion, where the *Inſtitutions* and Faith of Chriſt are preſerved.

When therefore you ſay, *if Church* Authority (meaning human Laws) *be a ſufficient Obligation upon them* to determine them, then *our Forefathers ought not in Conſcience to have ſeparated from the Church of* Rome *:

This, my Lord, is no more to the Purpoſe, than if you had ſaid, if the King of *France* has a Right to be obeyed all over *Europe*,

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* P. 118.

then

then all over *Europe* they ought in Conſcience to obey him.

For ſince it is neither pretended, nor allowed, that *human Laws* are a *ſufficient Obligation* to external Communion, to argue from this Suppoſition is as foreign to the Purpoſe, as to ſuppoſe that the King of *France* was Governour of all *Europe*.

The next Step you take is alſo very extraordinary, where having rejected *human* Authority from being a *ſufficient Obligation* to external Communion, you thus proceed, *But if Men are their own Judges by the Laws of God and of Chriſt in this Matter; if they have a Right to uſe their Judgment, and be determined by it*;——then here is a *Juſtification* of the *Reformation, and particularly of the Proteſtant Church of* England *.

The moſt *complaiſant* Juſtification, my Lord, that could poſſibly have been thought of, becauſe it as *peculiarly* juſtifies all the Enemies of the Church of *England*, of what kind ſoever, as it juſtifies the Proteſtant Church of *England*.

For your Argument proceeds thus; if there be no *human Authority* to which we are abſolutely obliged to ſubmit, but have a Right to uſe our own Judgments, then the *Reformation* is juſtified. Here we ſee the Doctrines of the reformed Church are not taken into the

* P. 181.

Queſtion;

Queſtion; ſhe is not ſaid to be juſtified, as being a *true* Church, or as preſerving thoſe *Orders* and *Inſtitutions*, which conſtitute the true Church; but is juſtified, becauſe Men may uſe their Reaſon, and not enter into any Communion which *human Laws* have happened to eſtabliſh. Now if we of the Church of *England* are juſtified in the Choice of our Religion, becauſe no *human Laws* have an abſolute Power to oblige us to be of any particular Religion, then all People, whether *Papiſts* or *Proteſtants*, whether *Quakers*, *Ranters*, *Jews*, *Turks*, and *Infidels*, are *equally* juſtified in the Choice of their *particular Ways* of Worſhip, becauſe *human Laws* have not an abſolute Power to oblige them to be of any particular Religion. So that though you call this a *Juſtification* of the Proteſtant Church of *England*, you might as juſtly have called it a *Juſtification* of *Quakers*, *Jews*, *Turks*, and *Infidels*: For it is as truly a Juſtification of *every one* of them, as it is a Juſtification of the Church of *England*.

But to proceed.

How comes it, my Lord, that the *Reformation* is *juſtified*, becauſe People may uſe their Reaſon, and are not under a Neceſſity from human Laws of being of this or that Church? Why muſt the *Reformation* be *right and juſt*, becauſe *human Laws* are not ſufficient to hinder a *Reformation*. Is there no *other Authority* that can make any particular Reli-

Religion neceſſary, becauſe *human* Authority cannot? May it not be our *Duty* to be of *this* Communion, and a *Sin* to enter into *another* Communion, though *human* Laws as ſuch cannot make the one a *Duty*, or the other a *Sin?* Does *Baptiſm*, the *Supper* of the Lord, and a *Belief* in *Jeſus Chriſt*, ceaſe to be neceſſary, becauſe that Neceſſity does not ariſe from *human Laws?*

Now if Things may be *neceſſary* to Salvation, though they are not made ſo by *human* Authority, then it is no Juſtification of the *Reformation* to ſay, that the *Reformers* might uſe their Reaſon, and not chuſe that Religion which *human* Laws commanded them to chuſe; this will be no Juſtification, till it appears, that they choſe that Religion which the *Authority* of God required them to chuſe.

For it would be Nonſenſe to ſay, People are juſtified for having ſuch a ſort of *Baptiſm*, becauſe the *Neceſſity* of Baptiſm does not ariſe from *human Laws*. Yet this is as *good Senſe*, as to ſay, ſuch a People are juſtified in their Religion, becauſe no Religion is made neceſſary by *human* Laws. For as they are only juſtified in Point of *Baptiſm*, who obſerve ſuch Baptiſm, as the *Authority* of God has *appointed*, ſo are they only juſtified in their *Religion*, who enter into that *Religion* which the *Authority* of God has *inſtituted*.

But your Lordſhip has no ſooner ſhown that *human* Authority, *as ſuch*, cannot oblige us

to

to be of any *particular Religion*, but you presently congratulate your Readers upon an entire Freedom from all Authority in Religion, and without once mentioning that the Reformation is right and just, because of the *Orders*, *Doctrines* or *Institutions*, which it maintains; you say it is justified for *such a Reason*, as justifies in an *equal* Degree every Religion, and every Change of Religion in the World. You have so far justified it, as to show that it is as well to be of it, as of any other Church; and as well to be of any other Church, as of it.

Who would not think, my Lord, that the *instituted Terms* of Salvation had something to do with the Justification of Christians? Yet you can justify People without any regard to them. Who would not think that a Religion is unjustifiable, if it is contrary to the Religion *instituted* by Christ? Yet your Lordship has justified *all Changes* in Religion, without any regard to the *Institutions* of Christ, solely for this Reason, because Men may use their own Judgment, and not submit to the Laws of Men, *as such*, in the Choice of Religion. As if, because they are not to be altogether governed by the Commands of *Men* in the Choice of a Religion, neither are they to be determined by the Authority of God, or any more tied down to *his Institutions*, than to *human* Laws. Who would think

think that no *Change* in Religion is *dangerous*, becauſe Religion is only inſtituted by God, and has his Authority to make it neceſſary? Yet your Lordſhip baniſhes all Danger from *every Change* of Religion, and pronounces the *ſame Safety* in every Opinion, becauſe People are under no abſolute human Authority.

It is very ſurprizing, after all this, to ſee your Lordſhip breaking out into *paſſionate* Expreſſions for the *Cauſe* of the *Reformation*, and ſo often *declaring*, that it is for the ſake of the Reformation that you have taken ſo much Pains, and with ſo much Pleaſure, in your *late Writings*.

Now it ſeems, your Adverſaries have undermined the very Foundations of the reformed Church of *England*; and that in this Manner.

Firſt; They juſtify the Church of *England*, by ſhowing that it maintains all thoſe *Orders*, *Inſtitutions*, and *Doctrines*, which Chriſt has made neceſſary to Salvation; that it is a *true* Church, becauſe it conſiſts of all thoſe Things, which by the *Inſtitution* of Chriſt conſtitute a *true* Church.

For this, your Lordſhip rebukes them as Enemies to the *Reformation*, as Friends to *Popery*; and declares, that the Proteſtants are not juſtified becauſe they have choſen a *true* and *right* Religion, but becauſe they

think

think they have chosen a true and right Religion.

Again, your Adversaries insist upon the *Necessity* of entering into Communion with the Church of *England*, because it is a true Church of Christ; and declare those guilty of the heinous Sin of *Schism*, who separate from her Communion.

Here again you condemn them, as conspiring the Ruin of the *Reformation*, because if the *Dissenters* are not justified in their Separation from the Church of *England* by their *private Persuasion*, neither is the Church of *England* to be justified for its Separation from *Rome*. So that the Difference between your Lordship and your Adversaries, in relation to the Reformed Church of *England* is this.

They support and recommend this Church, because it contains all the *necessary* Doctrines and Institutions of Christ, and consequently give it an Advantage over every other *way* of *Worship*, which is either *corrupted* or *defective*, in these Doctrines and Institutions of Christ.

But you *support* and *recommend* it (pardon the Expressions) not from any thing which relates to it at all, but from *private Persuasion*; and consequently allow every Religion in the World to be as *just*, and *good*, and *safe*, if Men are but *so persuaded*.

They

They defend the Church of *England*, by ſhowing what it is, and by aſſerting the Truth of its Doctrines.

You have no Title to be mentioned amongſt its *Defenders*, but as you may be called a *Defender* of *Quakers* and *Fanatics*, *Jews* and *Turks*, and every Religion in the World, which any one *thinks* to be *right*.

To proceed; As a farther *Defence* of the Reformation, you aſk, *How did the firſt Reformers behave themſelves? Did they not think and ſpeak of them (viz.* Abſolution and Excommunication) *as having nothing to do with the Favour of God, as human Engines, and mere Outcries of human* Terror? *And did they mean by this to claim to themſelves the Right of Abſolution, which they had denied to others, becauſe they were fallible and weak Men; or to aſſert a Power of Excommunication, ſo as to affect Men's eternal Salvation, to themſelves in one Church, which they had diſregarded and trampled upon in another?* No: They treated all Excommunications as alike, and upon an equal foot; *and could upon no other Account neglect and diſregard them as they did, but becauſe God had not given to any Man the Diſpoſal of his Mercy or Anger* *.

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* *Anſw. to Repr.* p. 121, 122.

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The Argument, my Lord, here proceeds thus: Firſt; That all Abſolutions and Excommunications muſt have been eſteemed alike, and equally *inſignificant* by our Reformers, becauſe they were not terrified at the Excommunications of the Church of *Rome*, nor thought an Abſolution from that Church neceſſary.

Secondly; That the Reformers having thus diſregarded *theſe Powers* in that Church, ought not to pretend, that the ſame Powers have any more Effect when they exerciſe them in this Church.

To this it may be anſwered, that if we ought not to pretend to *any Effects* in *Abſolution* or *Excommunication*, becauſe we diſregarded *thoſe Powers* as exerciſed by the Church of *Rome*; that then we ought not to pretend the Neceſſity of *any Faith*, becauſe we diſregarded the Faith of the *Romiſh* Church; nor the Neceſſity of any *Sacraments*, nor the Neceſſity of the *Canonical Writings*, becauſe we diſregarded the Canonical Books of the Church of *Rome*. And it is as good Senſe to cry out here, " Did they not treat their " *Sacraments* as mere *Inventions* of Men? " Did they mean by this to claim to themſelves a Power to make Sacraments *neceſſary* in *one Church*, which Power they had " trampled upon in *another*? Did they deny the Neceſſity of *ſeven* Sacraments " *there*, in order to aſſert the Neceſſity of " *two* Sacraments *here*? No: They treated

" *all* Sacraments as *alike*, and upon an *equal* " *foot* with reſpect to God's Favour, and " could upon no other Account neglect and " diſregard them as they did, but becauſe " God's Favour or Diſpleaſure was no ways " affected *by any Sacraments*.

Here let common Senſe judge, whether this Argument of yours, ſhowing the Unreaſonableneſs of pretending to any Significancy in *Excommunication*, becauſe we diſregarded the Excommunication of the Church of *Rome*, does not prove it as unreaſonable to inſiſt upon the *Neceſsity* of *any Faith*, or any *Sacraments*, or any *Canonical Books*, becauſe we denied the Romiſh *Creed*, the Romiſh *Sacraments*, and *Canon* of Scripture?

For our Reformers no more intended to ſhow that Excommunication was a *Dream* and *Trifle*, becauſe they diſregarded the Excommunication of the Church of *Rome*, than they intended to ſhow that all *Sacraments*, all *Faith*, and all *Scripture*, were *Dreams* and *Trifles*, by their not owning either the *Sacraments*, or the *Creed*, or the *Canon* of the Church of *Rome*. And, my Lord, what a worthy Defender of *Chriſtianity* and the *Reformation* would he be, who ſhould aſk us what we mean by the Neceſſity of *Sacraments*, or *Faith*, or *Scripture*, ſince we have not allowed the Neceſſity either of the Romiſh *Sacraments*, *Faith*, or *Scripture*? Yet ſuch a *Defender* is your Lordſhip, who

contends

contends that we ought to reject Excommunication as a *Trifle* and *Dream*, becauſe we diſregarded the Excommunication of the Church of *Rome*.

I have now gone as far in the Examination of your *Doctrines*, as my preſent Deſign will allow me, and am apt to think that in this and my *former Letters*, I have gone ſo far, as to ſhow, that a few more *ſuch Defences* of *Chriſtianity* and the *Reformation*, as you have given us, would compleat their Ruin, as far as *human Writings* can compleat it.

And had you meant ever ſo much harm to *Chriſtianity* and the *Reformation*, I believe no one who wiſhes their Confuſion, would have thought you could have taken a better way to obtain that End, than by writing as you have lately written.

For he muſt be a very Bitter *Enemy* to them both, who would not think it ſufficient to ſet *Chriſtianity* and *Mahometaniſm*, the *Reformation* and *Quakeriſm*, upon the *ſame* foot.

And he muſt be very ſlow of Apprehenſion, who does not ſee that to be plainly done, by reſolving all into *private Perſuaſion*, and making *Sincerity* in *every* Religion, whether *true* or *falſe*, the *ſame Title* to the *ſame Degrees* of God's Favour.

I ſhall not with your Lordſhip make any Declarations about *my own Sincerity*; I am content to leave that to God, and to let all the World paſs what Judgment they pleaſe about it.

I am Your Lordſhip's

Moſt Humble Servant,

WILLIAM LAW.

POST-

POSTSCRIPT.

THE Learned *Committee* obſerved to your Lordſhip, that *an erroneous Conſcience was never, till now, allowed wholly to juſtify Men in their Errors.*

This Obſervation I have ſhown to be *true* and *juſt*, as it implies, that though Sincerity in an *erroneous way* of Worſhip ſhould in *ſome degree* or other recommend Men to the Favour or Mercy of God, yet it is not that *entire Recommendation* to his Favour, which is effected by our ſincere Obedience in the *true way* of Salvation: That is, though it ſhould juſtify them in *ſome degree*, yet it cannot juſtify them in *that degree*, in which they are juſtified, who ſincerely ſerve God, in that true Religion which he himſelf has inſtituted.

Now our Juſtification, as it is effected by the Merits of Chriſt, is in *one and the ſame degree*; but as our Juſtification is effected by our own Behaviour, it is as capable of *different degrees*, as our Virtue and Holineſs is capable of *different* degrees; and it is alſo neceſſary that our Juſtification be *more* or *leſs*, according as our Holineſs is *more* or *leſs*.

Yet

Yet in anſwer to this Obſervation of the Learned *Committee*, you ſay, *it muſt either* juſtify *them*, *or* not juſtify *them*; *it muſt either juſtify them* wholly, *or not juſtify them* at all. This, my Lord, is as contrary to the Scripture, as it is to the Obſervation of the *Committee*. For our bleſſed Saviour, ſpeaking of the *Publican*, ſays, *I tell you, this Man went down to his Houſe* juſtified, rather *than the other* *.

Here, my Lord, is as plain a Declaration of *Degrees* in Juſtification, as can well be made, ſo far as Juſtification can be effected by our own Behaviour.

For, it is plain, the *Publican* was not *wholly* juſtified, becauſe then there would be no need of his embracing Chriſtianity; it is alſo plain, that he was juſtified *in part*, or elſe he could not be ſaid to be juſtified *rather* than the *Phariſee*.

If therefore your Anſwer confutes the Obſervation of the Learned *Committee*, it muſt alſo confute this Paſſage of *Scripture*.

I ſhall only add one word in relation to another Point.

I have already ſhown the Falſeneſs and evil Tendency of your Argument againſt *Excommunication*, which you aſſerted to be a *Dream* and *Trifle* without *any Effect*, becauſe it is our *own Behaviour alone* which can ſig-

* *Luke* 18. 10, &c.

nify

nify any thing to us with regard to the Favour of God. Now, my Lord, this *Philoſophy* ſtrikes at the very Vitals of the Chriſtian Religion: For, if this Sentence can have no Effect, if it is a *Dream* and *Trifle*, becauſe it is *our Behaviour alone* on which the Favour of God depends; then how ſhall we account for theſe Paſſages of Scripture, which attribute our *Juſtification* to the *Merits* and *Death* of Chriſt? As thus;

Jeſus Chriſt, who gave himſelf for our Sins *;

In whom we have Redemption through his Blood †;

Being juſtified by his Blood, we ſhall be ſaved from Wrath ‡.

It is the conſtant, uniform Doctrine of Scripture, that our Reconciliation and Peace with God, our Juſtification and Sanctification before God, is owing to the *Merits and Death of Chriſt*. But if what you have ſaid be true, that it is our *Behaviour alone*, which procures the Favour of God, then the *Blood* of Chriſt muſt be as truly without any Effect, as Excommunication is without any Effect.

For if the Favour of God depends entirely upon our *Behaviour alone*, then it can depend upon nothing elſe; and if it depend upon nothing elſe, then every thing elſe is equally trifling and without any Effect as to

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* *Gal.* 1. 3. † *Epheſ.* 1. 7. ‡ *Rom.* 5. 9.

that

that Purpoſe; and conſequently every Paſſage in Scripture which aſcribes our *Acceptance with God* to the *Merits and Blood of Chriſt*, is as much condemned by your Doctrine, as the *Effects* of Excommunication are condemned by it.

Whether your Lordſhip did not perceive the *Inconſiſtency* of this Doctrine, with that *Satisfaction* and *Redemption* which the Scriptures teach; or whether you *knowingly* intended to oppoſe this Doctrine, is, what I ſhall leave to every one's own Judgment. Thus much I ſhall only ſay, that as you have here directly contradicted this firſt Principle of the Chriſtian Religion, if it is not what you intended, I hope you will, for the ſake of Chriſtianity, venture to declare, that though you have aſſerted, that it is our *Behaviour alone*, yet it is not *our Behaviour alone*, but more particularly the *Merits* and *Death* of Chriſt, which recommends us to the Favour of God.

F I N I S.

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